

## **The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force Meeting on Chernobyl 24 April 2020**

This year's virtual Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) meeting on Chernobyl was chaired by Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator and UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, and moderated by Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, UNDP Regional Director of the Bureau for Europe and the CIS. The event is an annual IATF meeting which reviews progress made on Chernobyl-related activities for the past year and provides updates for participants, and was attended by representatives from the governments of the three most affected countries and the UN agencies, international organizations and other government representatives. *(Full list of participants attached)*

The details of all the recovery efforts and activities are outlined below while the full statements from all organizations' representatives can be found in the Annexes.

The Administrator thanked participating Governments, agencies and organizations for their inputs to the **Secretary-General's report "Persistent Legacy of the Chernobyl Disaster" successfully submitted to the 74<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly session** in September 2019. He acknowledged the **tremendous recovery efforts achieved by the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine for their joint work** supported by the international community and to take stock of mainstreaming local development activities in Chernobyl affected communities. He also **expressed his gratitude to the 45 nations which provided \$2.2 billion for the new safe confinement structure** which should make the reactor complex stable and environmentally safe for the next 100 years.

The Administrator noted that the knowledge gained from the tragedy at Chernobyl is helping other people and communities around the world to protect themselves and recover from trauma. He made the point that one of the most important lessons of Chernobyl at that time was about the provision of information to the people. In the current realities related to the COVID19, it is seen once again that irrespective of the source, for a health emergency, information is in short supply. And people need to receive it in easy-to-understand-language, from a reliable source, and up to date. UN's assistance in addressing the needs of the people around Chernobyl, first through emergency humanitarian aid and later by supporting recovery and social and economic development is still ongoing. The contribution of the UN country teams, specialized UN agencies, civil society organizations, international partners and donors to the concrete outcomes for the people and nature in Chernobyl-affected areas was recognized. UN will continue to engage and support the governments of Belarus and Ukraine to fill remaining gaps and fully overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl Incident.

The Permanent Representative of Belarus reminded the participants that the meeting was taking place on the eve of the **International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance day on 26 April** as declared by the General Assembly on December 2016 and regards it as **a global acknowledgement of the importance of keeping the Chernobyl Disaster high in the global agenda** drawing lessons from the emergency and recovery responses and sharing the experience. He **welcomed the creation of a webpage on the UN website** pertaining to the International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day and **expressed appreciation for UNDP's continued leadership and for its support to the international community's efforts** to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The Permanent Representative **offered to hold the next IATF on Chernobyl scheduled for April 2021 in Minsk** and invited the Administrator to attend. He concluded that international cooperation on Chernobyl remains vital and looks forward to close cooperation with all partners and friends to mitigate the long term consequences of the disaster and to achieve the SDGs in the affected regions.

Mr. Dmitry Chumakov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Mission to the UN expressed his appreciation for UNDP's leadership and coordination of the activities on the Chernobyl track and personally thanked Mr. Steiner for his continued support to the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Chernobyl. Mr Chumakov mentioned that **Russia remains engaged in planning and**

**implementation of international cooperation projects in Chernobyl**, aimed at the social and economic development and rehabilitation of affected areas. **The Russian Federation along with Belarus has started a two-year programme of joint activities** financed from the Union State of Russia and Belarus resources. Although much has been done to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy much more remains to be done. Mr. Chumakov stated that the Russian Federation is determined to further address this issue both in planning of internal policies and development of cooperation with Russia's neighbors. He also used the opportunity to **reiterate that the Russian Federation stands ready to consider requests for assistance from the Ukrainian authorities.**

Mr. Serhii Kalashnyk, Head of the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management mentioned that it is the first time that his agency is attending the IATF meeting. He also stated that **we all should always remember that Chernobyl is not only Ukraine's concern** and furthermore it is not only "a black hole in the hearts of those who remember but rather a territory of change, a zone of development of modern technologies, and an open-air laboratory." The State Agency provides radiological and environmental safety in the exclusion zone. It is also working to improve the radioactive waste management system and facilities designed for storage and disposal exclusion zone and on the creation of the needed infrastructure for visitors, preservation of cultural heritage and conduct of scientific research. Mr. Kalashnyk **encouraged the participants to visit the online exhibition of the Chernobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve** which was created to preserve the biodiversity of the Ukrainian Polissya.

Ms. Alexandra Solovieva, UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus spoke on behalf of UN Country Team in Belarus. She started by highlighting that **supporting Chernobyl recovery, reviving regions, and regional development in Belarus are priorities of the new reformulated UN sustainable development cooperation framework for 2021-2025.** Ms. Solovieva reported that UNDP works in partnership with the EU, Russian Federation, the Global Environmental Fund to support local economic development, SMEs, small and medium towns, businesses and green schools. UNICEF is present with the full range of its programming focused on promoting healthy lifestyles, providing child and youth friendly services, and the development of network of child-friendly cities. IOM is working on integrated management of the border between Belarus and Ukraine including in the affected regions, supporting counter trafficking efforts. WHO is addressing broader health issues within the post Chernobyl agenda. UNFPA is working on healthy lifestyle promotion among youth and supporting the work of Red Cross volunteers. UNHCR supports the economic and social rehabilitation of refugees and stateless persons in cooperation with the local authorities. Ms. Solovieva highlighted that regional and cross border cooperation presents opportunities for economic growth, tourism, ecosystem conservation and disaster risk reduction. The UN country team in Belarus is encouraging all interested partners to support international cooperation in Chernobyl.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Ukraine, Ms. Osnat Lubrani, stated that the UN's broad-based support to the region covers socio-economic development work, risk management, healthcare provision, work to reduce radiation exposure, as well as knowledge management and policy advice. Ms. Lubrani reported that UNDP's Accelerator Lab has paved the way for a new concept in sustainably tackling the growing problem of wildfires in what is a particularly hazardous environment. UNDP is also supporting community mobilization and inclusive local development, support to SMEs, promote gender equality and human rights; strengthen social inclusion and social cohesion. UNICEF continues to address the health needs of affected children, to advocate for policy, programmes and social services at a decentralized level to respond to the specific needs of communities and in particular young children. IAEA is still carrying work in support to the implementation of a project on decommissioning and radioactive waste management at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. WHO continues collaboration with the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine and its different organization on healthcare related issues and also hosts the Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network.

Mr. Werner Obermeyer, WHO Director for External Relations, stated that WHO is currently working together with international partners and Member States to combat the global spread of the COVID 19 and to support countries with guidance on diagnostics, treatment, safety measures, on mental health and many other aspects of the disease. The speaker noted that there are were striking similarities in certain aspects of the response to COVID19 as the response to the nuclear accident, notably in the area of mental and emotional health, importance of communications networks, need for medical surge capacity, among others. WHO still continues its non-emergency technical work towards protecting people's health from other diseases and over-exposure to various environmental risks. WHO's International Agency for Research on cancer (IARC/WHO) continues conducting the epidemiological research on Chernobyl populations but resource mobilization remains a challenge.

The Section Head of the Technical Cooperation Department in IAEA, Ms. Sandra Steyskal, informed that IAEA technical cooperation programme has **provided since 1990 over €1 million in assistance to national and regional projects** to help reduce the impact of the disaster in many areas and on several levels. The activities of the IAEA are categorized in **3 thematic areas namely, environmental radiation of affected territories; risk communication and public information sharing; assistance to Ukraine on safety and technical aspects of decommissioning**. Rehabilitation and environmental remediation will continue to be an important focus of the technical cooperation assistance.

Mr. Carl Blackburn, Specialist from the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, informed that through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division, **provides support and technical inputs** in the areas covered by its mandate concerning food and production in agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors. More specifically, in areas of **information on remediation of radioactive contamination in agriculture and information management for response and remediation**. FAO is also working with IAEA and WHO to **develop norms and guidance regarding maintaining food and agricultural standards**. It also **supports and coordinates research and development activities** related to radioactivity in food and agriculture.

Mr. Mahir Aliev, UNEP Regional Coordinator, stated that UNEP is currently implementing the project "Conserving, enhancing and managing carbon stocks and biodiversity in the Chernobyl exclusion zone" the components of which include: **assistance to the establishment of the Biosphere Reserve in the exclusion zone; development of a Research and Environmental Protection Center; and dissemination of the rich scientific knowledge**. This year's highlights feature assessment and development of a comprehensive fire management and response system in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone; assessment of the ecosystem services and their economic valuation; demarcation and zoning of the territory of the Biosphere reserve.

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, Mr. Kairat Umarov, highlighted that the decision to designate 26 April as International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day would raise awareness and drive action to prevent such accidents in the future. The Permanent Representative reminded the meeting that nuclear experts and military servicemen from Kazakhstan were among the first responders to arrive in the accident zone in April 1986 and in solidarity Kazakhstan has **allocated more than \$2 million to the reconstruction of the sarcophagus of the nuclear-power plant**. The Permanent Representative informed that Kazakhstan will be submitting to the UN General Assembly the **draft resolution "International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan"** and expressed his appreciation to those member states who provided support.

Mr. Simon Evans, EBRD Associate Director, informed that EBRD has a major portfolio of very mature projects with milestone such as the issuance of the certificate for the new safe confinement, which is at a final contractual stage, and which is the largest cooperation to date on nuclear safety by the EBRD with €1.5 billion funded by 45 countries. The EBRD remains **committed to the work at Chernobyl**, recognizing that it still represents one of the world most

challenging nuclear decommissioning projects, notwithstanding the investment made in it and which has allowed Ukraine to start looking at how to address long term decommission challenges.

Ms. Alisa Akutsina, Operations Analyst in the World Bank in Belarus, stated that the World Bank supports investments in the Gomel and Mogilev regions in areas of water and sanitation, forestry, biomass district heating, residential energy efficiency and general education. With reference to disaster risk preparedness, it is currently implementing a technical assistance project **focusing on capacity building to ensure disaster preparedness in Belarus covering: identification of risks, data availability and dissemination and national strategy for disaster risk reduction**. The project is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection and the Ministry of Emergency Situations and will result in an integrated approach for risk evaluation and basic and technogenic emergency situation (including radiation risks), in addition a road map and an investment plan will be developed.

**List of Annexes:**

1. Agenda
2. List of participants
3. Statements

## The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl

24 April 2020, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. NY time

To join the meeting please click [here](#):

Zoom Meeting ID: 619 371 969

Password: 600385

### AGENDA

**10:00 -10:10 a.m.**

**Welcome and Opening Remarks by the Chair**

*Achim Steiner, UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl,*

*Mirjana Spoljaric-Egger, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, moderator of the event*

**10:10-10:30 a.m.**

**Statements of representatives of the governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation, Ukraine**

*H.E. Mr. Valentin Rybakov, Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN*

*Mr. Dmitry Chumakov, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation to the UN*

*Mr. Serhii Kalashnik, Head of the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management*

**10:30 -10:40 a.m.**

**Updates from UNCTs in Belarus and Ukraine**

*Alexandra Solovieva, UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus on behalf of UNCT*

*Osnat Lubrani, UN Resident Coordinator in Ukraine*

**10:40 -11:05 a.m.**

**Updates from UN agencies**

*Werner Obermeyer, Director External Relations, WHO Office at the United Nations*

*Sandra Steyskal, Section Head of the Technical Cooperation Department, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*

*Qu Liang, Director, Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (AGE)*

*Mahir Aliyev, Regional Coordinator, Europe Office UNEP*

**11:05-11:25 a.m.**

**Updates and remarks from country representatives, IFIs and international organizations**

*H.E. Mr. Kairat Umarov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN*

*Mr. Simon Evans, Associate Director, Nuclear Safety Department, EBRD*

*Ms. Alisa Akutsina, Operation Analyst, World Bank*

**11:25 -11:30 a.m.**

**Closing remarks:** *Achim Steiner, UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl*

## Annex 2

### List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Name	Title	location
<b>Speakers</b>			
EBRD	Simon Evans	Associate Director, Nuclear Safety Department	London
IAEA	Sandra Steyskal	Section Head of the Technical Cooperation Department	Vienna
Mission of Belarus to the UN	Valentin Rybakov	Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN	New York
Mission of Kazakhstan Mission to the UN	Kairat Umarov	Permanent Representative	New York
Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN	Dmitry Chumakov	Deputy Permanent Representative	New York
State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management	Serhii Kalashnyk	Head	Kyiv
Joint FAO/IAEA Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture	Carl Blackburn	Radioactivity in Food and Food Irradiation Specialist	Vienna
UNEP	Mahir Aliyev	Regional Coordinator, Europe Office	Geneva
UNCT Ukraine	Osnat Lubrani	Resident Coordinator	Kyiv
UNDP	Achim Steiner	UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl	New York
UNDP	Mirjana Spoljaric Egger	Regional Director, RBEC	New York
UNDP Belarus	Alexandra Solovieva	Resident Representative	Minsk
UNICEF	Gabrielle Akimova	Deputy Representative	Minsk
World Bank	Alisa Akutsina	Operations Analyst	Minsk
WHO	Werner Obermeyer	Director External Relations	New York
<b>Other participants</b>			
DCO	Irena Vojackova-Sollorano	Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia	Istanbul
DCO	Valentin Hoschet	Regional Specialist	New York
DG-DEVCO	Pascal Daures	Head of Sector Nuclear Safety and Safeguards	Brussels
FAO	Carla Mucavi	Director, FAO Liaison Office to UN	New York
IAEA	Tracy Brown	Acting Director/Public Information Officer	New York
IOM	Tanya Orange	Head of Integrated Border Management Unit	Minsk
Joint FAO/IAEA Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture	Qu Liang	Director, The Joint FAO/IAEA Division	Vienna



Ministry of Emergency of the Republic of Belarus	Petr Nikolaenko	Deputy Head of Department	Minsk
Ministry of Emergency of the Republic of Belarus	Mikhail Potemkin	Chief Specialist of the Department of Scientific Support and International Cooperation	Minsk
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus	Elena Kovalevskaya	Counsellor, Department of Multilateral Diplomacy	Minsk
Mission of Belarus to the UN	Tamara Kharashun	Counsellor	New York
Mission of Belarus to the UN	Artsiom Tozik	Deputy Permanent Representative	New York
Mission of EU to the UN	Elizabeth Pape	Minister Counsellor	New York
Mission of Germany to the UN	Verena Klinger-Dering	Counsellor	New York
Mission of Italy to the UN	Alberto Dal Degan	Counsellor	New York
Mission of Japan to the UN	Hiromasa Hazama	Second Secretary	New York
Mission of Kazakhstan to the UN	Arman Issetov	First Deputy Permanent Representative	New York
Mission of Kazakhstan to the UN	Nurzhan Rakhmetov	First Secretary	New York
Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the UN	Daniyar Omurzakov	Third secretary	New York
Mission of Poland to the UN	Karolina Krywulak	Second Secretary	New York
Mission of Switzerland to the UN	Feyory Mahari	Adviser	Geneva
Mission of Tajikistan to the UN	Alisher Bakhtiyorzoda	Attache	New York
Mission of Ukraine to the UN	Vitalii Bilan	First Secretary	New York
Mission of United Kingdom to the UN	Ed Rice-Howell		New York
Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN	Natalia Karmazinskaya	First Secretary	New York
State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management	Margaryta Rayets	Head of Division for International Cooperation	Kyiv
UNDP	Dafina Gercheva	Resident Representative	Kyiv
UNFPA	Marta Diavolova	Regional Adviser	Istanbul
UNFPA	Stefania Letta	Regional Desk	New York
UNFPA	Charlotte Gueye	Consultant	New York
UNICEF	Anne-Cecile VIALLE	Emergency Specialist - Lead Desk Eastern Europe Central Asia	Paris
UNV	Dmitry Frischin	Regional Manager	Istanbul
WHO	Zhanat CARR	Scientist	Geneva

## **Statement of Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator and UN Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl**

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*As prepared for delivery.*

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome participants to the first virtual Zoom IATF on Chernobyl. The Member States representatives of the three countries most affected by the Chernobyl nuclear accident:

- H.E. Mr. Valentin Rybakov, Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations,
- Mr. Dmitry Chumakov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations,
- and Mr. Serhii Kalashnyk, head of the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management.

I acknowledge the presence of representatives of the Permanent Missions of the Kazakhstan, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and Tajikistan.

I also welcome the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representatives in Minsk and Kyiv, DCO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, the representatives from IAEA and FAO joining from Vienna, UNEP from Geneva, UNV from Istanbul, UNICEF from France, WHO and UNDP from New York, and representatives of EBRD and WB.

First of all, let me start by thanking the participating governments, agencies and organizations for the inputs to the Secretary-General's report "Persistent Legacy of the Chernobyl Disaster", which was successfully submitted to the 74<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly session in September 2019.

This year marks the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant on 26 April 1986. The disaster had grave humanitarian, environmental, social and economic consequences. It cast a radioactive plume across a swathe of northeastern Europe, and its effects are still being felt in the region and around the world.

This legacy is being reminded in recent days with forest fires raging in a contaminated area near the defunct Chernobyl nuclear plant, raising alarm bells over possible consequences. Already in lockdown because of the coronavirus, Ukraine has been also contending with fires in the post-apocalyptic landscape of the Chernobyl zone.

This anniversary is an occasion to acknowledge the tremendous recovery efforts achieved by the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine for their joint work, supported by the international community and to take stock of mainstreaming local development activities in the Chernobyl affected communities.

The anniversary offers an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned, reflect on the recovery process, and to appreciate once again the heroic efforts of the first responders who rushed to the damaged reactor on 26 April 1986 and sacrificed their health, and in many cases their lives, to save others.

One of the most important lessons was about the provision of information to the people. In the current realities related to the COVID19, we see once again that irrespective of the source, for a health

emergency, information is in short supply. And people need to receive it in easy-to-understand-language, from a reliable source, and up to date.

The Chernobyl disaster also brought the international community together to support the enormous efforts of local, regional and national authorities. Knowledge gained from the tragedy at Chernobyl is helping other people and communities around the world to protect themselves and to recover from trauma, including during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear emergency of 2011.

The most visible sign of the international cooperation efforts is the New Safe Confinement structure, the major milestone achieved in 2019, with €2.2 billion provided by over 45 donor nations through funds managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The scope of the project in terms of international cooperation is one of the largest ever seen in the field of nuclear safety and should make the reactor complex stable and environmentally safe for the next 100 years. We owe our gratitude to the Governments and international institutions that contributed to the costs of this record-breaking structure.

Since 1986, the United Nations has helped to address the needs of people in the areas surrounding Chernobyl, first through emergency and humanitarian aid, and then by supporting recovery and social and economic development, which still continues.

The United Nations has also helped to provide essential information on the continuing impact of radiation on local communities. The communities, which were affected by the accident, are now more self-reliant and self-sufficient, and lessons have been learned for the future.

The concrete outcomes for the people and nature in Chernobyl-affected areas would not be possible without our UN Country Teams, specialized UN agencies, civil society and the international partners and donors.

For almost a decade, with support from the development partners and in close cooperation with local authorities and sister agencies, UNDP has been leading a transition from the emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to capacity-building and sustainable development. UNDP has incorporated the support provided to Chernobyl-affected regions into its regular development programming in Belarus and Ukraine.

We will continue to engage and support the governments of Belarus and Ukraine to fill the remaining gaps and fully overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl Incident.

### **Statement by Mr. Valentin Rybakov Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN**

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First of all, I wish to extend my gratitude to UNDP, its Administrator, Achim Steiner for convening this important meeting today, just before the International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day.

Let me recall that in December 2016, the General Assembly declared 26 of April as the International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day. For us this is a global acknowledgement of the importance of keeping the Chernobyl disaster high on the global agenda, drawing lessons from the emergency and

recovery responses, and sharing the experience gained. We welcome the creation of a web-page pertaining to the International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day on the UN web-site in the section “International Days”. Belarus invites UNDP to keep this page updated on a permanent basis and to replenish it with the relevant links referring to the documents and related events.

Today’s meeting is a good opportunity to review progress made on Chernobyl related activities since the last IATF in April 2019 and to brief on the plans made following the adoption of the latest UNGA resolution on Chernobyl of 16 December 2019.

The resolution recognises the persistent legacy of the Chernobyl disaster and empowers the UN system to undertake meaningful steps aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Chernobyl-affected regions and communities. Belarus is counting on the coordination functions of the UNDP and IATF in implementing that.

I would like to stress the importance of the coordination mechanism embodied in the IATF on Chernobyl led by UNDP. Concerted actions of the affected countries, UNDP and other UN agencies have been yielding encouraging results. We are grateful to UNDP for its leadership and continued support to international community’s efforts to overcome consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

For 34 years Belarus has made every effort to improve the well-being of affected communities and revive their economic potential. Strengthening the resilience of these communities is our utmost priority. Belarus has managed to turn the Chernobyl-affected regions into zones of business activity. Important investment projects are implemented there. Entrepreneurship gradually gains its footing. Demographic situation in these regions has improved. Our goal is not just to revive these areas but to secure their further sustainable development.

The latest UNGA resolution on Chernobyl outlines future directions for programmes for restoring the areas affected, including the development of local entrepreneurship and tourism, job creation, the transition of local economies to environmentally sound technologies, the promotion of sustainable forest management and agricultural innovation, the inclusion of people in vulnerable situations in local development processes and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Belarus hopes for support of these approaches from the UN agencies and Member States. Although the scale of problems we solve today is not of the same magnitude as 30 or 20 years ago, I am sure there is still a huge potential for international cooperation on Chernobyl.

In 2021 the international community will mark 35 years since the Chernobyl disaster. Let us start the preparation for the date. Belarus would like to suggest holding in Belarus in 2021 the special meeting of the IATF on Chernobyl dedicated to the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. The IATF session could be one of the major elements of the visit of the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner to Belarus. We sincerely hope that you, Mr. Steiner, will support this initiative. We are ready to start discussing our relevant common steps here in New York and with the UNDP office in Minsk.

Belarus believes that international cooperation on Chernobyl remains vital and looks forward to fruitful cooperation with all its partners to mitigate long-term consequences of the disaster and achieve the SDGs in affected regions.

## **Statement by Mr. Dmitry Chumakov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Mission to UN**

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April 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to express our appreciation to the UNDP for its leadership and coordination of the activities on the Chernobyl track and personally to Mr. Steiner for continued efforts to support the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Chernobyl. Such meetings traditionally provide us with a good opportunity to compare notes and receive an updated information from the Member States and the United Nations agencies on the activities related to Chernobyl.

Russia remains engaged in planning and implementation of international cooperation projects in Chernobyl, aimed at social and economic development and rehabilitation of affected areas.

We are particularly thankful to our friends from the Republic of Belarus for their substantive contribution and efforts to keep this issue in focus of the UN at the proper level. We stand ready to further support you in this endeavor. We need to unite our efforts to never let this tragedy be forgotten and lessons left unlearned.

In 2019 Russia and Belarus in the framework of the Union State have started a two-year Program of joint activities for the protection of the population and the rehabilitation of affected territories. Its work is financed from the Union State resources. The goal of this Program is to create conditions of secure livelihoods of population on the territories affected by the Chernobyl disaster.

We have also begun development of a pilot off-road vehicle capable of fighting forest fires in the areas with high level of radioactive contamination. It is also planned to make a unified catalog of public exposure doses. We think it is very relevant in current circumstances around Chernobyl areas.

The Government of the Russian Federation attaches particular importance to implementation of national projects and programs in order to assist the affected population, including the provision of social and medical support, as well as compensations for the damage of property. These activities are implemented under federal act which is subject to periodic review and aimed at ensuring that it's up-to-date, needs-oriented and people-targeted. In support of its implementation, the Government runs related federal programs, namely on the well-being of children, the provision of housing for Chernobyl's liquidators and the restoration of the affected territories.

I would like to conclude with acknowledging the fact that much has been done to overcome the consequences of Chernobyl tragedy, but yet much remains to be done. The Russian Federation is determined to further address this issue both in planning of internal policies and development of cooperation with our neighbors.

We look forward to hearing today some update on Chernobyl especially from the UN country teams. We express particular concerns over the forest fires around Chernobyl areas since the beginning of April. We use this opportunity to reiterate that should we receive a request from the Ukrainian authorities to provide assistance, we stand ready to consider it.

I thank you.

### **Statement by Mr. Sergei Kalashnik, Head of the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management**

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Dear Distinguished delegates,

I would like to address my speech to you on behalf of the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management.

The State Agency highly appreciates the opportunity to be a member of UN Inter-Agency Task Force meeting on Chornobyl for the first time, and in this regard, we are thankful to His Excellency Mr. Achim Steiner, the UNDP Administrator, and, of course, our Permanent Mission in New York.

The important thing we all should always remember is that Chornobyl issue is not a Ukraine's concern only – it has become a challenge for the whole world. By challenge, I mean the overall contribution into the world's safety, security and international relations in terms of peace and nuclear prosperity in its good sense.

Within these 34 years, Chornobyl used to be the world's greatest catastrophe ever happened, and hence - the world's biggest fear as well.

For the time being, Chornobyl is not only “a black hole in the hearts of those who remember”, but it is rather a territory of change, a zone of development of modern technologies, and an open-air laboratory. This exclusion zone has undergone through a pronounced transformation.

We, together with the rest of the world, with 39 donor countries who made a large contribution altogether managed to create the world's largest mobile facility - a New Safe Confinement - to protect humanity for 100 years from the ionizing radiation of the destroyed power unit.

Every day, more than 5,000 highly skilled personnel provide radiological and environmental safety in the exclusion zone. They work to ensure that present and future generations are reliably protected from exposure to radiation.

We are also working to improve the radioactive waste management system and facilities designed for storage and disposal in the exclusion zone: active work is underway on the development of national radioactive waste management infrastructure and the decommissioning of the ChNPP. We engage international experts and study best practices to choose the most optimal concepts for the characterization and disposal of radioactive waste in Ukraine, with the aim to bring Ukrainian legislation in this area to the European model.

Ukraine, like many other countries, has recently chosen the way of creation of deep geological repository. In this regard, we are making every effort to move to the practical steps and have a very long-prospective view in order to make life easier (and safer) for the future generations.

A few years ago, in order to preserve the biodiversity of the Ukrainian Polissya, Chornobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve was created. Just imagine, in 30 years nature has restored itself! A number of species have found their home in the exclusion zone. And its nature is really amazing. In this regard, I would highly encourage you to visit the online exhibition to see with your own eyes – or, what is better, to come to the exclusion zone.

Another emphasis of our work is on the creation of needed infrastructure for visitors, preservation of cultural heritage and, of course, conduction of scientific research.

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

I would like to stress out that Ukraine highly appreciates the joint work provided with our long-term reliable partners, such as the EBRD, IAEA, European Commission, NATO and a range of foreign States in terms of the implementation of international projects at the Chornobyl site, aimed both at overcoming of the consequences of Chornobyl disaster and addressing the emerging issues in part of radioactive waste management.

Your Excellency, Mr. Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

As of today, we have reached some valuable results. Nevertheless, we are facing challenges due to a range of reasons in terms of the management of the exclusion zone, a huge and beautiful, capable but still sophisticated territory.

In this regard, I can assure you, we altogether have a lot of work to do ahead.

So far, we do believe that by our joint efforts we will be able to provide an environmentally safe future not only for Ukraine, but also the rest of the world!

Thank you!

### **Statement by Ms. Alexandra Solovieva, UNDP Resident Representative representing UN Country Team in Belarus**

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Dear Achim, Excellencies, dear partners and colleagues,

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the UN Country Team in the Republic of Belarus as the UN Resident Coordinator was called to another event. I am joined here by representatives of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and members of the UNCT.

Today 34 years after Chernobyl catastrophe, it still touches our hearts and the needs of people of Chernobyl affected areas are important to our work. The UN development system in Belarus is working closely on the ground with our national counterparts in implementing the UN General Assembly Resolutions 71/125 and 74/114 and our joint activities and results were reflected in the UN SG'S Report on the persistent legacy of the Chernobyl disaster.

Supporting Chernobyl recovering, reviving regions, and the regional development in Belarus are priorities in the newly formulated UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2021-2025 and the respective country programmes of UN agencies. I purposefully use the words recovering and reviving as the experience in Chernobyl areas offers important lessons in resilience, innovation; development gains and technologies are of high value to Belarus and internationally.

Soon upon my arrival in Belarus in cooperation with the Ministry of Emergency Situations we visited the districts of Khoinki and Bragino and the Polesie State Radioecological Reserve. In my discussions with local authorities, elected representatives, businesses, communities and scientists we identified both challenges and opportunities for further UNDP assistance and the development of broad-based partnerships.

Today with the COVID-19 pandemic, more than ever the priorities of socio-economic development of Chernobyl and Belarus regions come to the fore. Economic growth among districts is uneven, sectors of tourism and production may be affected, and vulnerable groups of population especially children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and poor households require continued support. So do the small and



medium enterprises and local private initiative, presenting a solid basis for cooperation with the International Financial Institutions, private companies and banks, taking the form of financial services, bankable projects, investment promotion, and digital solutions. Regional and cross-border cooperation presents opportunities for economy, tourism, ecosystem conservation, and disaster risk reduction.

I reflect on solid partnerships of the UN system on the ground with key line ministries: of Emergency Situations, Foreign Affairs, Economy, Education, Health, Labour and Social Protection, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Tourism and Sport, the Parliament, regional and district executive committees, civil society and academia. Together as UN country team, based on national needs, local knowledge, and use of international partnerships and expertise, we make our responses effective.

Specifically, UNDP in partnership with the European Union fosters local economic development and SMEs across the country but in particular in three Chernobyl affected districts: Bragin and Khoyniki in Homiel oblast and Bykhov in Mogilev oblast. In 2019, district plans for developing SMEs were developed, pilot business support initiatives funded, and this year, a new round of business and social initiatives. In partnership with the Russian Federation, UNDP works on promoting employment and self-employment in small and medium towns, in particular in Chaussy, Krichev and Mstislavl districts of Mogilev oblast. Business training was organized, six business incubators opened, jobs created, partnerships with the banks and cooperation agreements signed. Together with EU, 6 project pilot sites from Chernobyl-affected areas received air quality monitoring equipment and currently function as resource centers for development of “Green Schools” programme.

UNICEF is present in the Chernobyl impacted areas with the full range of its programming. UNICEF is improving the quality of life in Child and Adolescent Friendly Cities (CAFC) through the development of self-government, robust monitoring of situation with the realization of child rights and promotion of inclusive education. We are also aware that the situation in the institutions providing care for children in the Chernobyl affected areas is worrisome and we as the UNCT are working together with the national partners to provide all the relief and assistance needed. I will ask my colleague Gabriella Akimova to speak for two minutes if you allow.

IOM is working on integrated management of border between Belarus and Ukraine, including in the affected regions. IOM also supports countertrafficking efforts in Homiel and Mahiliou oblasts. WHO is oriented towards addressing the broader health issues within the post-Chernobyl agenda. UNFPA is working on healthy lifestyle promotion among youth in Brest oblast, and supporting the work of Red Cross volunteers in all oblasts of Belarus, including those affected by Chernobyl. UNHCR supports the economic and social rehabilitation of refugees and stateless persons through temporary residence points in Brest and Homiel in cooperation with the local authorities.

UNCT in Belarus takes this opportunity to encourage all interested partners to support international cooperation on Chernobyl including through an integrated programme, partnerships, innovation and investment. There is a strong need to enhance networking around key sectors and stakeholders, development solutions and financing mechanisms, science and innovation to continue provide response to the aftermath of Chernobyl while ensuring that no one is left behind.

## **Statement by Ms. Osnat Lubrani, UN Resident Coordinator representing UN Country Team in Ukraine**

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Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, Heads of Diplomatic Missions, Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies,  
Distinguished Representatives of Governments,

I am honoured to represent the UN Country Team in Ukraine in this UN-wide coordination meeting on Chernobyl. This meeting remains a necessary platform for discussing how national governments and the international community can work effectively to ensure the response to the Chernobyl catastrophe remains as important as it did 26 years ago.

Much learning and work has already occurred in ensuring nuclear safety, recovery of the territories, and mitigating its long-term environmental impact.

The recent fires that have ravaged the area around the former NPP were felt vividly by the 3m locked-down inhabitants of Kyiv with the city having – for a few days this month - the ominous distinction of the world's worst air quality. Naturally climate change is further aggravating this problem.

I'm pleased that new thinking is being leant to how to solve this problem and in this regard I'm pleased to report that UNDP's Accelerator Lab (concerning open burning and related wildfires in the Chernobyl exclusion zone and beyond) has paved the way for a new concept in sustainably tackling the growing problem of wildfires in what is a particularly hazardous environment.

The UN's broad-based support to the region covers socio-economic development work, risk management, healthcare provision, work to reduce radiation exposure, as well as knowledge management and policy advice. In the interests of time, allow me to highlight just a few examples:

UNICEF continues to address the health needs of affected children, by focusing on advocating for healthy lifestyle and reproductive, maternal and child health services. Advocacy work is carried out to ensure that policy, programmes and social services at decentralized level respond to the specific needs of communities, and in particular young children; to raise awareness of parents, families and other primary caregivers on healthy lifestyles, but also on young children's needs and wellbeing.

IAEA continues to support the implementation of a project on decommissioning and radioactive waste management at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

UNDP continues to support community mobilization and inclusive local development through innovative solutions to increase energy efficiency in public and residential buildings; support SMEs; promote gender equality and human rights; strengthen social inclusion and social cohesion.

WHO continues collaboration with the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine and its different organizations that provide health care for Chernobyl-affected population and Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant workers – and hosts the Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network.

Colleagues, over the years, we have learnt key lessons and identified important areas that we need to continue to take forward:

First, we need to ensure that Chernobyl recovery efforts are linked with the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda and be fully aligned with the national plans for sustainable development of

Ukraine. We need to pursue a holistic approach in addressing the social, economic, health and environmental challenges linked with the accident and this requires breaking down the sectoral silos and applying a systemic approach to ensure that no one is left behind.

The United Nations in Ukraine stand ready and is fully committed to further strengthening strategic partnerships, building alliances, mobilizing funding and attracting financing for the development of the Chernobyl-affected territories.

Secondly, fostering cooperation, promoting dialogue and working alongside communities have a key role to play in order to address the long-lasting consequences of Chernobyl. Building upon the United Nations' strong community-based approaches, we are able to foster an enabling environment and build a platform for dialogue between the affected communities, local government and other decision-makers. This becomes even more crucial, as Ukraine is implementing its decentralization reform.

Thirdly, the Exclusion Zone needs special attention to better manage its natural resources, including water basins which are experiencing flooding in spring and require monitoring. While this area is home to over 58 animal and 269 plant rarest species, it also requires protection against poaching to preserve its fragile biodiversity. Worth noting also the recent initiative from the Government of Ukraine to set up the Chernobyl Renewable Energy Hub. The idea is to use the infrastructure available in Chernobyl to attract investments into solar and wind energy in the Chernobyl region.

Lastly, we, as the international community alongside the national governments should continue to advocate for the improved and changed perception and stigma that surrounds Chernobyl and its affected areas. We should continue supporting sustainable development in the recovering regions, focusing on entrepreneurships, tourism and transition to green economies.

President Zelenskyy last year issued a Presidential Decree aimed to transform the Exclusion Zone into one of the growth points of a new Ukraine; including creating a "green corridor" for tourists, new tourist routes and waterways. This also can create exciting opportunities.

Colleagues, the transformation of the Chernobyl-impacted region remains a long-term challenge. It is a huge undertaking which will only be accomplished with collective actions by all partners and at all levels. The United Nations family here in Ukraine remains fully committed to full recovery and sustainable development of Chernobyl affected regions.

Thank you

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**Statement by Mr. Werner Obermeyer, Director, External Relations, WHO Office at the UN**

24 April 2020

Excellencies, colleagues.

W. Our staff working tirelessly together with international partners and member states to combat the global spread of the virus and to support countries in providing guidance on diagnostics, treatment, safety

measures in all areas of health care, on mental health and psychological support, on occupational safety, and many other aspects of the disease.

Along with the pandemic response, the WHO continues its non-emergency technical work towards protecting people's health from other diseases and from over-exposure to various environmental risks, including the direct and indirect consequences of past radiological and nuclear accidents.

What was impossible not to notice, were striking similarities in certain aspects of response to COVID19 to the response to a nuclear accident. The interventions such as identifying affected persons/screening, triage, contamination and decontamination measures, hospitals surge capacity, public sheltering, communicating risks, use of social media, managing rumors and social stigmatization of affected people, also would apply to chemical and radiological hazards. As with the Fukushima and Chernobyl aftermath, transition and return to normality after the ongoing pandemic will need to use a decision-making processes based on a firm evidence base.

Similar to Chernobyl and Fukushima, COVID19 is also making impact on mental and emotional health of the affected populations coping with anxiety, stress, fatigue, and social isolation. Numerous Chernobyl and Fukushima studies reported increased levels of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, rates of suicide, and other mental health and psychological consequences among evacuees, emergency and clean-up workers, health care workers, parents of the affected children, and children themselves. Stigmatization, labelling, bullying of children at schools have been reported among other factors exacerbating the impact of the accident. To date, psychological and mental health impact of nuclear accidents on health, also called non-direct health impact, are considered to be the largest in terms of number of affected persons. To address the need for expanding the scope of the radiation emergency preparedness and response and take into account the interventions aiming at mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), WHO is developing a framework for managing such broader responses, to be published in 2020.

In terms of emergency preparedness and response, the lessons learnt from past accidents contributed to building robust systems and infrastructure for radiation monitoring in the environment, especially in countries utilizing nuclear energy. Fires which occurred in Ukraine earlier this month have raised concerns about the possibility of reactivation of radioactive material with air particulates and has been a concern to many countries in Europe.

Similar to COVID19, Chernobyl caused fears and myths about its true health consequences. The recent HBO miniseries devoted to the tragic events following Chernobyl accident, generated a vivid discussion on the issue of risk perception vs the extent of health risks ranging from an increase in thyroid cancer incidence in exposed children and adolescents to claims of the number of deaths.

WHO's International Agency for Research on cancer (IARC/WHO) continues conducting the epidemiological research on Chernobyl populations, however, resource mobilization for the multidisciplinary research on health of clean-up workers, their offspring and residents of contaminated territories, remains a main challenge.

To highlight the high risk of irretrievable losses of unique and valuable scientific information, and remaining research gaps due to existing lack of resources, IARC/WHO has recently published a letter in The Lancet entitled "Future of Chernobyl research: the urgency for consolidated action" (see [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30675-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30675-9/fulltext) ).

### **Statement by Mr. Qu Liang, Director, Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (AGE)**

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*Dear UN Coordinator Steiner, Your Excellencies, --- Dear Colleagues*

*First, thank you on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization and of the joint FAO and IAEA programme for making time to hear our report today.*

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, there are several collaborative initiatives where the FAO, through the Joint FAO/IAEA Division, is providing support and technical inputs in the areas covered by its mandate concerning food and production in agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.

**TURNING - Specifically to radioactivity in agriculture,** Activities of The Joint FAO/IAEA Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture include:

**Information on remediation of radioactive contamination in agriculture**

- we support and maintain an international network of experts who can be called on to support and provide advice. We recently published the proceedings<sup>1</sup> of a technical workshop on Strategies and Practices in the Remediation of Radioactive Contamination in Agriculture, this workshop and publication builds upon the Chernobyl experience and the experience gained in Japan related to reducing radioactivity in the agricultural environment and in food and agricultural production. Experts from Chernobyl affected countries contributed to the proceedings and helped to ensure that the focus remains on providing valuable information to agricultural departments world-wide.

As regards **information management for response and remediation**

- last year we provided information on an international project, that, included experts from the Chernobyl affected countries and developed a management and decision-support system for nuclear emergencies that could affect food and agriculture. Building on this project we recently started a new five-year initiative in this area – a internationally coordinated project on the **Remediation of Radioactivity in Agriculture**<sup>2</sup>: The emphasis is on how remediation can be optimized and this is relevant for Chernobyl because it will include the long-term experience of the Chernobyl affected areas, particularly with radiocaesium. Institutions from Belarus, the Russian federation and Ukraine are part of this international project.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the area of **Normative standards and guidance** -

- The FAO is working in partnership with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization to develop guidelines to support Member Countries and help authorities implement normative standards on radioactivity in food. An ongoing initiative is to produce guidance on levels of radionuclides in foods. There are robust standards in relation to nuclear emergency preparedness and response. HOWEVER, more work is needed for “non-emergency” and “long-after-an-emergency” situations. New work has addressed natural radionuclides in food and the next phase will address human-made radionuclides and build on the considerable expertise and literature from Chernobyl affected countries. We are also working with the international food standards committees of the Codex

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<sup>1</sup> Strategies and Practices in the Remediation of Radioactive Contamination in Agriculture  
A joint FAO/IAEA Report of a Technical Workshop Held in Vienna, Austria, 17–18 October 2016, Vienna (2020), ISBN 978-92-0-102120-5  
<https://www.iaea.org/publications/13444/strategies-and-practices-in-the-remediation-of-radioactive-contamination-in-agriculture>

<sup>2</sup> Remediation of Radioactive Contaminated Agricultural Land <https://www.iaea.org/projects/crp/d15019>

Alimentarius Commission to ensure that any future guidance can be included in food standards in the most efficient way.

**FINALLY, Ladies and Gentlemen**

In summary - the FAO is continuing to work in five major areas

1. Policy advice and practical support – mainly through the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme
2. Information Exchange and maintaining expertise on remediation
3. Information Management – development of decision support tools for managing radioactive contamination - building on experience
4. Norms and Guidance – maintaining food and agriculture standards
5. Support and coordination of research and development activities – related to radioactivity in food and agriculture.

UN Coordinator Steiner, Your Excellencies

Once again thank you

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your attention.

**Statement by Mr. Mahir Aliyev, Regional Coordinator, Europe Office UNEP**

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**UNEP/GEF Project: Conserving, Enhancing and Managing Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone**

UNEP implements a project in Ukraine aimed at expanding the current use of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone to encompass ecosystem values and provide ecosystem services to the benefit of local, national and international stakeholders. The project components include:

- 1) Assistance to the establishment of the Biosphere Reserve in the Exclusion Zone to improve the monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types and associated carbon benefits in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

- 2) Development of a Research and Environmental Protection Center to lead the collection and synthetization of existing research, undertake a gap analysis, and develop and implement a research programme.
- 3) Dissemination of the rich scientific knowledge and making it available for an international dissemination.

This year's highlights feature assessment and development of a comprehensive fire management and response system in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone; Assessment of the ecosystem services and their economic valuation; Demarcation and zoning of the territory of the Biosphere reserve.

UNEP helps collect and make globally accessible the wealth of the scientific knowledge accumulated on the radio-ecological situation in Chernobyl over three decades. The project aims to leave behind a well-functioning modern Biosphere Reserve which is capable of preserving and putting to sustainable use the unique ecosystem of the Exclusion Zone, thus helping turn the sad legacy of Chernobyl into a hopeful story of future development.

Contact person: Mahir Aliyev, Regional Coordinator, UNEP Europe Office, [mahir.aliyev@un.org](mailto:mahir.aliyev@un.org)

### **Statement by Mr. Kairat Umarov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN**

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Dear Administrator,  
Distinguished excellencies and colleagues,

I am honoured to speak today at this important event and I thank Administrator Steiner as well as the Inter-Agency Task Force for organizing this online streaming to discuss the grave effects of the Chernobyl disaster. We believe that the decision to designate 26 April as International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day will raise awareness of the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters and drive action to prevent such casualties in the future.

Approximately 30,000 technical and nuclear experts and military servicemen from Kazakhstan were among the first responders to arrive in the accident zone in April 1986 to help reduce the consequences of the Chernobyl explosion. In solidarity, Kazakhstan participated actively in the reconstruction of the sarcophagus of the Chernobyl nuclear-power plant, allocating more than \$2 million to that cause. And we always support GA resolution on Chernobyl.

We fully support the international efforts in overcoming the negative aftermath of this tragic disaster. The recent forest wildfires near the Chernobyl site and COVID-19 show that international efforts will have to be constantly stepped up to return it to normalcy. We in Kazakhstan understand quite well the consequences of nuclear disaster. Kazakhstan itself has suffered from nuclear-weapons testing. Having directly experienced those horrors, my country is today recognized as a passionate campaigner for peace and nuclear security and disarmament. The area in Kazakhstan affected by intense nuclear testing



comprises more than 300,000 square kilometres, and the consequences are tragic. The land has been rendered useless and unfit for human habitation, agriculture or economic activity. Nearly 1.5 million people are still suffering from nuclear and radiological contamination, resulting in fatalities, cancer and weakened immune systems. It is not just health issues but psychological effects when children with severe deformities are born.

We thank the United Nations system and several countries for helping to fund the recovery efforts. Much has been done, but the effects of 40 years of testing will require many more years before that vast area is rehabilitated.

I would like to underscore, that this year, we will introduce a draft resolution entitled “International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan”. It will be the tenth time that such a draft resolution has been submitted. Since we have been still coping with the legacy of radiological exposure, nuclear contamination and probably continue doing it for foreseeable future my delegation hopes to receive the support of Member States this year. I express our deep appreciation to the Member States that have previously supported that resolution.

To conclude, today’s briefing is a clear evidence of the recognition by the international community that the challenges of Chernobyl still remain a matter of serious concern for our UN family. We stand with all countries around the world that have suffered from nuclear tests and disasters. It confirms our deep conviction that such issues can be settled only by the joint efforts of the international community.

Thank you.

### **Statement by Ms. Alisa Akutsina, Operation Analyst, World Bank**

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Even though the World Bank does not have specifically Chernobyl-related project in the Republic of Belarus, the WB supports investments in the Gomel and Mogilev regions through operations in the following sectors: water and sanitation, forestry (including forest fire prevention), biomass district heating, residential energy efficiency, general education.

Additionally, in order to enhance disaster risk preparedness in the Republic of Belarus, the World Bank is currently implementing a Technical Assistance Project entitled “Enhancing Disaster Preparedness in Republic of Belarus.” The project focuses on capacity building to ensure disaster preparedness in Belarus covering: identification of risks, data availability and dissemination and national strategy for disaster risk reduction. The project has three components: support of the wider political dialogue on disaster risk management in Belarus; enhancing post-disaster damage and loss assessment system; and improving hydrometeorological and radiological service delivery and early warning systems. The Project is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection and the Ministry of Emergency Situations. The project will result in an integrated approach for risk evaluation and basic and technogenic emergency situation (including radiation risks), in addition a road map and an investment plan will be developed.

As part of this Technical Assistance Project the World Bank is working with the Center of Hydrometeorology and Control of Radioactive Contamination and Environmental Monitoring of the Republic of Belarus (Belhydromet) to help them develop a long-term approach/plan to improving service delivery, focusing on the information and product needs of key users, such as the Ministry of Emergency Situations and Ministry of Forestry. The aim is to support delivery of better and more actionable information products, including on radiological hazards. For example, this includes recommendations on potential strengthening of cooperation between Regional Specialized Meteorological Centers (RSMCs) of World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Belhydromet to receive support in terms of more sophisticated nuclear release forecasts of atmospheric dispersion model results (e.g. including wet deposition of radionuclides).