On 26 April 2021, we mark the 35 years since the worst man-made nuclear disaster in the history of nuclear energy. The accident’s radiological and non-radiological consequences affected directly and indirectly the lives of millions of people in Europe. This anniversary offers an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned, reflect on the recovery process, and 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.

The 35 years of recovery efforts that followed Chernobyl nuclear accident, have taught the global community invaluable lessons of resistance, self-reliance, community engagement, and humanity. The health impact of the accident has been described in the WHO report published in 2006 under the framework of the UN Chernobyl Forum (2003-2005) – a joint undertaking by eight UN agencies and the Governments of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine – that issued authoritative scientific findings on the accident’s consequences for health and the environment. Further supported by the 2007 UN General Assembly Resolution and UN Action Plan for the 3rd decade of Chernobyl, the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN) project was implemented by UNDP, IAEA, UNICEF, and WHO to help local communities “return to normal”. The ICRIN project activities included the dissemination of information through education and training for teachers, medical professionals, community leaders, and the media; providing local residents with practical advice on health risks and healthy lifestyles; the creation of Internet-equipped information centers in rural areas; and small-scale community infrastructure projects aimed at improving living conditions and promoting self-reliance in the affected areas of Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine. In 2016, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in his statement on Chernobyl’s 30th anniversary, said: “Looking ahead, long-term recovery efforts around Chernobyl must be linked to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda’s promise to leave no one behind applies above all to those caught up in crises around the world; those who have struggled for years to overcome trauma and fears about their health and livelihoods; and those who continue to demonstrate their resilience as they walk the road to recovery.
and development.” The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl that meets every year on the date of the Chernobyl anniversary, calls upon consolidated global efforts towards Chernobyl recovery and mitigation of health and socio-economic consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

Today, when the world is fighting the global COVID-19 pandemic, similarities can clearly be seen between certain aspects of the response to COVID-19 and to a nuclear accident. Interventions, such as identifying affected persons/screening, triage, contamination and decontamination measures, hospitals surge capacity, public sheltering, communicating risks, use of social media, infodemic, managing rumors and social stigmatization of affected people, also apply to radiological hazards. In addition, like the Chernobyl aftermath, transition and return to normality after the ongoing pandemic will need to use a decision-making process based on a firm evidence base.

The webinar is organized jointly by WHO and the WHO Collaborating Center for Radiation Emergency Medicine – National Research Center for Radiation Medicine (NRCRM) in Kiev, Ukraine. The main focus of the webinar is on the lessons learned from the Chernobyl in terms of improvement of the national response arrangement as well as mitigation of the largest health-related impact of the accident – psychosocial and mental health consequences, which are closely related to the socio-economic factors, community engagement, and risk communication strategies. Like COVID-19, Chernobyl continue causing persisting fears and myths about its true health consequences. The parallels are drawn with the management of infodemic during Covis-19 response and risk communication after a nuclear emergency.

**Provisional agenda**

Moderator: Z. Carr (WHO)

13.00 – 13.10 – Welcome addresses – J. Habicht (WHO), D. Bazyka (NRCRM, Ukraine)

13.10 – 13.30 – Chernobyl lessons for preparedness to radiation emergencies – D. Bazyka (Ukraine)


13:45 – 14.05 – Mental health impact of the Chernobyl disaster - E. Bromet (USA) and J. Havenga (The Netherlands)


14:45-15:00 – Q&A

**Registration**

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# Webinar Speakers

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<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Jarno Habicht</strong></td>
<td>WHO Representative (WR) and Head of WHO Country Office (CO) since 2018. Having worked for WHO since 2003, he served as a WR and Head of WHO CO in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan (2015-2018) and in the Republic of Moldova (2011-2015). Previously served as Health Specialist for Estonian Health Insurance Fund and consultant and researcher for various health projects and health information initiatives of the Department of Public Health (University of Tartu) and Ministry of Social Affairs in Estonia, among others. He holds a Diploma in Medicine (MD) and Doctor Medicine (PhD) from University of Tartu, Estonia.</td>
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<td><strong>Prof. Dmitry Bazyka</strong></td>
<td>Director General of the National Research Center for Radiation Medicine and the Head of the WHO Collaborating Center, a long-standing member of the WHO REMPAN network. He is specialized in radiological sciences, radiobiology and immunology, and radiation protection. His research is mainly focused on health consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Prof. Bazyka is Scientific Secretary of the National Commission on Radiation Protection of Ukraine and Head of the MoH and National Academy of Medical Sciences Joint Commission on medical consequences of the Chernobyl accident.</td>
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<td><strong>Dr. Mustafa Sait-Ametov</strong></td>
<td>UNDP Regional Development Programme Manager (since 2020) and specializes in sustainable regional and local development. He previously served as Regional SDGs Portfolio Manager (2018-2020), and Programme Coordinator/Project Manager for Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Economic Recovery component of the UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme in the Eastern Ukraine (2015-2018). He holds a PhD degree in mathematics.</td>
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<td><strong>Prof. Evelyn Bromet</strong></td>
<td>Distinguished professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the Stony Brook State University of New York, USA. Her research on disaster mental health started with a groundbreaking study of the psychological impact of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident on mothers of young children, and the workers at the plant. She also collaborated with the Ukrainian Psychiatric Association in Kyiv on the first psychiatric epidemiologic research on the psychological impact of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident on evacuees in Kiev.</td>
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<td><strong>Patrick</strong></td>
<td>Founder of Mesh &amp; Moser Situation Management, a consultancy that advises governments, companies, and other organizations on questions of risk &amp; crisis communication, decision making and exercises. Patrick is a member of the EPR and radiation risk committees of the German Commission on Radiological Protection and has a vast experience including: Crisis Communication Adviser of the IAEA; Spokesperson for one of the world’s largest airlines; Director of media relations for one of the largest pharmaceutical companies. Patrick holds a Master’s degree in International Relations and History.</td>
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<td><strong>Since 2002, Dr Zhanat Carr</strong></td>
<td>is serving as a Medical Officer at the Radiation and Health Unit of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, at the World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. She is an MD - radiation oncologist with MSc degree in Radiation Biology, PhD in radiation oncology, and post-doctoral training in radiation epidemiology. Dr Carr is managing the WHO’s area of work pertaining to preparedness, response, and recovery after radiological and nuclear emergencies.</td>
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