

**Remarks by**

**Mr. Aleg Ivanou  
Chargé d'Affaires,  
Deputy Permanent Representative  
of the Republic of Belarus  
to the United Nations**

**at the special meeting devoted to the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the explosion at the  
Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant**

**(New York, 27 April 2004)**

Distinguished Mr. Under-Secretary-General, distinguished Mr. Administrator, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We highly estimate the decision to make this commemorative meeting a truly remarkable event. Our special thanks go to Ms. Maryann De Leo, the Producer and Director of the film “Chernobyl Heart”, Ms. Adi Roche, the Head of the Chernobyl Children’s Project, and Dr. Novick who have found an opportunity to be with us today and to present the Oscar winning documentary. This film provides us with a unique opportunity to assess the real magnitude of devastating health psychological social and economic consequences of the tragic accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. The international community, from our point of view, definitely needs such an opportunity after 18 years passed since the accident. It raises the hopes that the needs and requirements of the people in the affected regions of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, who suffer from those consequences, will not be forgotten against a background of recent humanitarian crises, armed conflicts and global threats and challenges.

My native country the Republic of Belarus remains the most affected one. The contaminated area constitutes 21 per cent of our territory, and the number of people exposed to the effects of radiation is over 2 million, including half a million of children and adolescents under the age of 18 years old. The international experts assessed the total damage from the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe to Belarus. It reaches the amount of 235 billion US dollars.

The Government of Belarus is making significant efforts to minimize the consequences of the accident. As a result of the measures adopted, a number of important problems have been solved, including transfer of 140 thousand people out of the most heavily contaminated districts and their resettlement in new places of residence. We have spent around 14 billion US dollars to solve these problems.

Of course, in the 18 years that have elapsed since the accident, its consequences have not been fully liquidated, since they exceed the scope of the country's capacities. Minimizing and addressing the consequences of a disaster of such magnitude is an extremely difficult task requiring huge material and financial resources. Therefore further consolidation of efforts in this field at both the national and the international levels is required.

The most important tendency in the development of Chernobyl-related international cooperation at the current stage is a shift in its priorities – a transition from the provision of humanitarian assistance to long-term social and economic rehabilitation and ensuring sustainable development in the affected districts. Belarus was the first to begin developing a new generation of Chernobyl-related initiatives consistent with these new priorities. The “Cooperation for Rehabilitation” Programme is the most remarkable example of such initiatives. The Programme provides for a comprehensive and integrated solution to problems in the areas of health and environmental protection, economic development, dosimetry, radiation protection, cultural legacy, and education through the implementation of individual integrated projects. It is simply aimed at improving the quality of life of the people in the contaminated areas. We sincerely hope that our partners among the donor countries will actively participate in implementation of the Programme.

In order to attract additional resources for addressing the Chernobyl-related needs the Belarusian state bodies are doing their utmost to cooperate with foreign charitable organizations in carrying out humanitarian actions and initiatives in Belarus. The film “Chernobyl Heart” is a unique example of such initiatives. We do hope that this film will bring about many other similar ideas actions proposals and initiatives aimed at rendering assistance to the people who suffer from the long-lasting consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

I thank all of you for participation in this event and wish you every success in your deals and endeavors.