

## **UNITED NATIONS ADDRESS:CHERNOBYL ANNIVERSARY**

GREETINGS: MR. SECRETARY GENERAL, AMBASSADORS TO THE UNITED NATIONS, HONORED GUESTS AND FRIENDS AND MY THANKS TO SHEILA NEVINS AT HBO AND MARYANN DELEO FOR MAKING THIS SCREENING POSSIBLE.

TODAY, THE UNITED NATIONS RECOGNIZES AND CALLS THE WORLD'S ATTENTION TO THE GREATEST NUCLEAR DISASTER IN THE HISTORY OF OUR WORLD. HOPEFULLY THIS WILL BE THE LAST NUCLEAR DISASTER WE AS A PEOPLE WILL EVER BE FORCED TO FACE. AS YOU HAVE SEEN IN "CHERNOBYL HEART" THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION ARE STILL FACED WITH THE EFFECTS OF THIS HORRIFIC CATASTROPHE. ALTHOUGH ALL THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION ARE AFFECTED IT IS THE CHILDREN WHO ARE SUFFERING THE MOST. TODAY, STANDING BEFORE YOU AS A FATHER, A PHYSICIAN AND AS A HUMANITARIAN I MUST TELL YOU THAT I AM DEEPLY SADDENED BY WHAT THESE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS ARE STILL HAVING TO ENDURE DAILY. RADIATION, THE SILENT AVENGER IS QUIETLY, PAINLESSLY AND INVISIBLY ALTERING THEIR GLANDS, IMMUNE SYSTEM AND PERHAPS THEIR VERY GENETIC MAKEUP.

LET ME TAKE YOU FOR JUST A MOMENT TO ONE OF THE SADDEST PLACES IN TIME. CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR A MOMENT AND IMAGINE IF YOU WILL THAT YOU LIVE IN ONE OF THE CONTAMINATED REGIONS OF BELARUS, UKRAINE OR RUSSIA. YOUR LIFE IS DEEPLY AFFECTED BY THE RESIDUAL RADIATION, BUT TODAY YOU ARE HAPPY, WHY BECAUSE YOU ARE ABOUT TO BECOME A FATHER, MOTHER OR GRANDPARENT. TODAY YOUR NEW BABY HAS COME AND HE OR SHE IS SO BEAUTIFUL, SO ALIVE. BUT THEN YOU NOTICE THE CHILD MORE CLOSELY, IS HE BREATHING A LITTLE TOO FAST, IS SHE BLUE, YOU THOUGHT NEW BABIES WERE PINK? SO, YOU BUNDLE UP THIS NEW MIRACLE AND OFF YOU GO TO THE DOCTOR,

YOUR CHILD IS FINALLY SEEN BY THE DOCTOR, AND YOU NOTICE THAT WHEN LISTENING TO YOUR CHILD'S HEART A FROWN DEVELOPS ON HER FACE. THEN SHE UTTERS THOSE TERRIBLE WORDS, "YOUR CHILD HAS A HEART DEFECT. TAKE THE CHILD IMMEDIATELY TO MINSK, OR KYIV OR MOSCOW OR ST. PETERSBERG."  
"HOPEFULLY THEY WILL KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE."

YOU ARRIVE AND ARE TOLD YOUR CHILD WILL REQUIRE SURGERY TO SURVIVE TO HIS OR HER FIRST BIRTHDAY. YOU ARE DEVESTATED! IT IS THEN THAT YOU LEARN THAT

YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT, MONTHS UNTIL A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY COMES TO OPERATE ON THE MOST DIFFICULT CASES.

THE WAITING LIST FOR SURGERY IN BELARUS IS 7,000 AND IN UKRAINE IT IS IN EXCESS OF 10,000. THIS IS THE "CHERNOBYL" THAT I HAVE TRIED TO ERADICATE SINCE 1994.

I AM HONORED AND EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH YOU TODAY. CHERNOBYL HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE MINDS OF MOST OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE COUNTRIES THAT SUFFERED DIRECTLY FROM ITS' DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES. IT IS MY FERVENT HOPE THAT HBO'S "CHERNOBYL HEART" WILL REFOCUS THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD ON THE CONTINUING PROBLEMS THAT THE GOVERNMENTS, PEOPLE AND MOST OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF THESE REGIONS ARE FACING DAILY. AS THE AMERICAN INDIAN'S OF THE PAST SAID, WE HAVE BUT ONE EARTH, LET US LIVE TOGETHER WITH IT IN HARMONY AND REVERENCE.