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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

later: Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/45/3, A/45/621, A/45/643; A/C.2/45/8)

1. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/45/621), said that it contained information on action taken to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/236 and also gave information on the status of existing international protocols and conventions for mutual assistance in cases of disasters.
2. At the national level, 71 countries had established national committees or focal points for the Decade. Many national committees were in the process of preparing their own plans of action for the Decade. At the international scientific level, the International Council of Scientific Unions had established an ad hoc committee for the Decade which had met in Bulgaria in October 1990 to identify Decade-related projects. The Union of International Technical Associations and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations had also held a joint meeting in Paris to identify the objectives and features of technical projects for the Decade.
3. The report provided details about the activities of the United Nations system, which was endeavouring to identify and mobilize the capacities of its constituent organizations to promote Decade objectives. In June 1990, he had chaired a meeting of the United Nations system Steering Committee to give the necessary impetus to system-wide activities. He had also consulted with the Steering Committee about the membership of the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Decade, and it had been agreed that the organizations concerned would prepare plans and projects to be considered by that Committee. It was extremely important that a solid foundation should be laid for the work of the Scientific and Technical Committee, which should provide guidance for scientific and technical activities undertaken in the context of the Decade and adopt a framework programme setting out goals, targets and proposals for such activities. The Scientific and Technical Committee would also consider the disaster prevention and mitigation capacities of developing countries and ways of providing those countries with the technology required for that purpose. As co-ordinator for United Nations programmes and activities during the Decade, he intended to ensure that the relevant bodies of the United Nations system were adequately prepared for meetings of the Scientific and Technical Committee and that the Committee's work received adequate follow-up.
4. The Decade had been the subject of discussions at the recent joint meetings of the Advisory Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). Participants had stressed the importance of Decade activities and had called for greater efforts to integrate disaster prevention and mitigation in the development process, an effort which he considered crucial, in view of the severe negative impact natural disasters had on developing countries. The joint meetings had also emphasized the need to make full use of the existing substantive

(Mr. Blanca)

capacities of the United Nations system. To that end, a careful assessment of those capacities would be required.

5. The Decade secretariat which was being established must make full use of existing technical capacities of the United Nations and of those of UNDRO in particular. It must serve as a facilitator, catalyst and co-ordinator, while UNDRO and other organizations had responsibility for executing specific activities. The roles of the secretariat and UNDRO should complement each other, and he intended to ensure that collaboration between the two was fully realized.

6. It was therefore necessary to ensure that the resources needed to carry out the activities called for in General Assembly resolution 44/236 were available; much remained to be done in that regard. Consultations were currently in progress on the composition of the special high-level council; it was therefore imperative that an effective secretariat should be established as quickly as possible.

7. Mr. ESSAAFI (United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator) said that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was a reconfirmation of the validity of the past efforts of UNDRO to assist disaster-prone countries in reducing their vulnerability through practical mitigation measures. UNDRO had already played a major role in preparing for the Decade by providing secretariat support services and organizing and servicing the meetings of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and of the United Nations Steering Committee for the Decade. It would continue to provide the necessary support for the Decade and had already made considerable efforts to incorporate the objectives of the Decade into its project activities.

8. UNDRO had begun implementation of two major sectoral projects. The first involved a co-operative effort with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the field of global disaster management training. The second project was geared towards the development of an international interactive information management system to support relief co-ordination and disaster mitigation.

9. A number of key points should be borne in mind. First, a close link should always be maintained between the activities of the Decade and actual responses to disasters. Secondly, awareness and acceptance of the concept of disaster mitigation must be increased, and the existing human network for disaster management must be strengthened. Thirdly, resources must be found to sustain an adequate level of activities. Lastly, all participants in the field of disaster management must work together in a co-ordinated way towards common objectives; in particular, the danger of parallel - and contradictory - approaches must be avoided.

10. Mr. MERANI (Director, International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction secretariat) noted that major efforts were under way in observance of the Decade. At the national level, many countries had observed the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction. The Organization of American States had passed a consensus resolution on that body's contribution to the Decade. Japan had recently convened an international conference on the Decade which had been attended by experts in disaster reduction from the international community and the United

(Mr. Merani)

Nations system; that event would have an impact on the framework programme for the Decade which was being elaborated.

11. Various organizations within the United Nations system had also been developing plans and projects which would be considered by the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Decade. He cited in that context a joint UNDRO/UNDP training programme aimed at developing the expertise of national personnel as well as UNDP resident representatives in disaster relief and mitigation. The World Health Organization (WHO) had decided that the theme of the next World Health Day would be "Disasters". The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) had made "Natural disaster reduction" the theme of the 1990 World Meteorological Day. In addition to brochures and a video on that topic, WMO had developed three projects designed to achieve Decade goals. UNESCO and the World Bank had also engaged in Decade-related activities.

12. Like the Director-General, he attached great importance to the preparations for the work of the Scientific and Technical Committee, which would meet for the first time in early 1991. It was important that that Committee should address the question of national capacities and the acquisition of the necessary technology by developing countries. The Decade secretariat would hold an informal consultation the following week to advise the members of the Scientific and Technical Committee with regard to an agenda and documentation. The meeting would be attended by experts and by representatives of the United Nations organizations concerned and would be held at Castelnuovo di Porto, Italy, with financial support from UNDP. A meeting of the Inter-agency Working Group would be held at Geneva to assess the outcome of that consultation.

13. The recent joint ACC/CPC meetings had highlighted the need to accelerate the pace of implementation of Decade activities at the international level. The results of those meetings would be taken fully into account by the Decade secretariat and transmitted to the Scientific and Technical Committee for consideration as that body elaborated the framework programme.

14. Once fully established, the Decade secretariat would make full use of the existing substantive capacities in the system, particularly those of UNDRO. The role of co-ordinator and catalyst, which was assigned to the secretariat, was viewed as totally distinct from the implementation role assigned to UNDRO and other organizations. The secretariat had a clear conception of the way in which it must function in relation to other United Nations bodies.

15. The secretariat would be a small one, funded from extrabudgetary resources and supported by experts provided by United Nations organizations, Governments and non-governmental organizations. In addition to the Director, it would comprise two or three professional or higher-level staff who would focus on relations with national committees and the development of national capacities. Those posts, together with costs relating to consultants and support staff, travel and equipment, should be funded from voluntary contributions. The secretariat would also rely on the services of experts from Governments and the United Nations

(Mr. Merani)

system. To date, the services of one expert had been provided by the United States of America, and Japan and the Soviet Union would second experts in the near future, while other countries were actively considering that possibility. Officials had been seconded by WMO and WHO, with other organizations, including the League of Red Cross Societies, considering the matter. Voluntary contributions would also have to cover some or all of the costs of meetings of the special high-level council and the Scientific and Technical Committee and other expert consultations that might prove necessary.

16. The secretariat intended to exercise prudence and thrift in the utilization of resources. It would, however, have to be expanded over time as its workload increased and as it sought to attain greater credibility with the international community. The secretariat must be endowed with a minimal capacity to provide substantive servicing to the bodies being established and greater support to national efforts. In its resolution 44/236 and in the joint ACC/CPC meetings, the General Assembly had attached importance to the mobilization of resources for the Trust Fund for the Decade, which was also intended to provide resources for project activities within the United Nations system. Once the framework programme had been developed by the Scientific and Technical Committee and priority activities identified, it would be easier to determine the volume of resources required.

17. Mr. HINTEREGGER (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities currently under way or planned within the United Nations system relating to the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and its consequences (A/45/643), said that it provided information about the various activities of the specialized agencies with regard to the accident and included a status report by IAEA on the major project carried out by a group of international experts to assess the radiological consequences of the Chernobyl accident on human health and the environment. It also made particular reference to agreements between the Government of the USSR and specialized agencies, notably IAEA, WHO and UNESCO, and dealt with the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), and that of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents (IAC/RNA), which had been established following the accident.

18. The report also gave an account of the United Nations fact-finding mission to the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident. The mission, comprising representatives of UNICEF, the United Nations Office at Vienna, UNEP, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNDRO, DTCD and ECE, had been primarily concerned with economic and social, rather than scientific or technical, issues. It had identified a number of common priority concerns. Special mention was made of the fact that the initial response to the accident had focused on scientific and technical problems, rather than on informing the public about radiation contamination and its potential health effects. The result of that omission had been anxiety and a lack of confidence in official pronouncements. To deal with such reactions the preparation of a scientifically justified concept for safe living in the contaminated areas was advocated as a matter of urgency. In questions of health care and nutrition, the highest priority had been accorded to

(Mr. Hinteregger)

the protection of children, and other vulnerable groups. Resettlement of the population had been complicated by the lack of clear data on safe levels of radiation.

19. The report contained a variety of recommendations for further action within the United Nations system. It noted that the Chernobyl nuclear accident could not be regarded as the problem of one nation. In response to the appeals for international assistance made by the Governments of the USSR, the Byelorussian SSR, and the Ukrainian SSR, efforts had already been made by Governments and NGOs, business and scientific groups and individuals to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident. With a view to providing the appropriate machinery within the United Nations system to handle a broad range of international activities on the problem, the report recommended that the General Assembly should establish a United Nations programme of international co-operation to mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

20. The report also recommended that a special fund should be set up to receive voluntary contributions to finance the Programme, and that the Secretary-General should designate a co-ordinator for the programme and an appropriate secretariat.

21. It also noted a growing need for closer co-operation among the organizations involved as the number of projects increased. It recommended that while IAC/RNA should be requested to continue its work on the co-ordination of the scientific and technical activities, the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination should establish as soon as possible a task force to address and mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Such a task force would provide a forum for dealing with the socio-economic aspects of the situation in the affected areas.

22. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that four and a half years had passed since the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was situated only 100 km from the Republic's capital, Kiev. More than 1,600 Ukrainian towns and villages, with a combined population of over 15 million, had been contaminated by radiation. A total of 3.5 million hectares of Ukrainian farmland, including 2 million hectares of arable land and 1 million hectares of forests, had been contaminated, and the Ukraine's principal source of drinking water, the Dnieper River, was likely to remain polluted by atomic radiation for a long time to come. More than 1.8 million people, including 380,000 children, lived in highly contaminated areas. Moreover, recent studies had revealed traces of contamination in areas previously considered to be clean. Over the past two years, there had been a significant increase in oncological diseases, particularly thyroid cancer and leukemia among children.

23. In the years since the accident, the Ukrainian SSR had taken vigorous measures to minimize its adverse effects. In the first year after the accident, some 100 million people had been resettled from contaminated zones to 101 new residential areas in uncontaminated regions. In 1990, 15,000 people would be offered apartments in various cities of the Republic. People who had received high doses of radiation were under continuous medical observation and, by the end of

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

1990, some 450,000 people, including 111,000 children, would have received essential medical care.

24. The Chernobyl problem was at the top of the agenda of the new Ukrainian Parliament and Government, which had established a Supreme Soviet Commission on the Chernobyl accident and a State Committee to protect the population from the effects of the Chernobyl accident. A State programme of urgent measures for the years 1990-1992 for dealing with the consequences of the accident in the Ukrainian USSR, and a comprehensive programme for the period up to the year 2000 were currently being prepared.

25. An analysis of all aspects of the situation following the accident led to the obvious conclusion that, given the magnitude of its implications, the Chernobyl disaster had become a global environmental problem. The Ukrainian SSR was well aware that it could not sustain the ongoing and planned restoration and rehabilitation efforts on its own. The international dimension of the Chernobyl problem demanded co-ordinated international action, and the Ukrainian SSR had been heartened by the many offers of assistance it had received from Governments and international organizations.

26. His delegation attached particular importance to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/50 on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The main provisions of that resolution opened up a new and vitally important area for the activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The principal objective of such activities should be to work out a new and comprehensive approach to international co-operation in dealing with the Chernobyl problem.

27. The report of the Secretary-General on the Chernobyl accident (A/45/643) contained detailed and objective information on measures which had been carried out or which were planned by United Nations bodies and specialized agencies in order to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy. If implemented, the recommendations contained in the report would constitute an adequate international response to the global challenge of Chernobyl.

28. It was necessary to speed up the implementation of a technical co-operation project with UNEP, WHO and IAEA to explore the environmental and health effects of radiation. The Ukrainian SSR had become a party to an agreement on the establishment of an IAEA international research centre at Chernobyl and it was prepared to offer countries and international organizations every opportunity to conduct a broad spectrum of research at that centre.

29. Joint studies must be conducted with a view to developing viable methods for the decontamination, recycling and use of contaminated timber resources. The Ukrainian SSR would have to rely on international co-operation to obtain technologies for extracting radioactive silt, and binding radionuclides and preventing them from contaminating rivers and lakes. It was also important to work out recommendations with regard to agricultural production in contaminated areas.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The Ukrainian SSR was particularly concerned about the problem of "burial grounds" containing thousands of tons of equipment, household items, soil and leaves contaminated above acceptable levels. The main problem, however, was to ensure the safety of the Ukrainian population.

30. In the next few days, the delegations of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Soviet Union would be submitting a draft resolution on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Its main objective was to impart a sense of direction to the activities of the bodies, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in that area and to ensure that those activities were more effective and better co-ordinated. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report would facilitate effective concerted action by the bodies, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, prevent duplication of work and conserve resources.

31. Mr. PETRONE (Italy), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the Twelve favoured an initiative by the General Assembly on the subject of international co-operation in the elimination of the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and would be happy to join in sponsoring a draft resolution along the lines mentioned by the representative of the Ukrainian SSR. He was fully aware of the work that remained to be done in dealing with the aftermath of that accident and of its vast psychological effects on the population of the affected countries. It was clear from the statements just been made that the extent of the contamination was greater than had previously been assumed. It appeared that the tremendous efforts to cleanse contaminated areas were being offset by natural factors that led to recontamination.

32. The efforts of the United Nations system, particularly IAEA and WHO, demonstrated that the United Nations was capable of stimulating international co-operation and mobilizing scarce expertise and resources. Such co-operation was particularly useful in the case of accidents with transboundary consequences. The General Assembly should invite the Secretary-General to formulate a United Nations programme of international co-operation to co-ordinate the activities being carried out by various United Nations organs and agencies. The Assembly should also encourage those bodies to respond to the proposals for co-operation programmes submitted by the Governments of the USSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR. However, the Secretary-General should also define the scope of such an initiative, bearing in mind the need for a rapid, cost-effective response, and mobilize further efforts in support of those countries. The programme thus elaborated should have a specific time-frame and should build upon the findings of IAEA and WHO as to the accident's radiological consequences.

33. The Secretary-General should be given a margin of flexibility in determining co-ordination modalities; if a co-ordinator was needed, it should be an existing Under-Secretary-General, whose mandate should be carefully defined with due attention paid to the need to avoid duplication. Co-ordination efforts and related activities could be financed within existing budgetary provisions. If that was not

(Mr. Petrone, Italy)

possible, appropriate voluntary contributions could be sought from States, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and the private sector.

34. He favoured the establishment of a task force, but drew attention to the need to avoid unnecessary overlap with the work of IAC/RNA. It would be useful if the bodies and agencies concerned could prepare a joint document setting out co-operation goals and modalities. The task force would be composed of the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, representatives of the Governments concerned and external scientists and experts. The task force would stimulate and monitor the activities of the United Nations system to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

35. The Twelve expected to review the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly on the response to the Chernobyl accident at the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council and the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. They would also participate constructively in negotiations on that subject in the Second Committee, in order to help alleviate the sufferings of the people affected.

36. With regard to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, he expressed disappointment at the delay in the appearance of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/621) and the patent lack of co-ordination and the intra-secretariat controversy that had accompanied its preparation.

37. Governments had reacted promptly to the proclamation of the Decade, and the Twelve welcomed the fact that many had established national committees or focal points. In that connection, he appealed to Governments to consider disaster policies in the context of environmental protection in general. He also welcomed the Decade-related activities of the United Nations system, which demonstrated the willingness of various organizations to integrate disaster management in their operational activities. The growing interest of the scientific community in disaster preparedness and prevention was also welcome.

38. Nevertheless, many of those activities would have been carried out even if the Decade had not been proclaimed and no resources had been made available to the United Nations. Given the importance of national efforts and the need to avoid any duplication of activities or the wasting of United Nations resources, it was appropriate to inquire what new contributions the Decade and its machinery were making. The Decade secretariat must not compete with UNDRO; rather, the two bodies must maintain the closest co-operation and implement an appropriate division of labour. The Twelve regretted that there had been little such co-ordination thus far, as the Secretary-General's report made evident. In the future, the report should be prepared jointly by UNDRO and the Decade secretariat, and the Director-General should ensure that that was done.

(Mr. Petrone, Italy)

39. The Decade secretariat must make use of all the existing capabilities of UNDRO and policy communications to the Director-General should be channeled through UNDRO. At the same time, the emphasis placed on disaster prevention and preparedness should not detract from UNDRO relief activities. The Decade secretariat should be kept as small as possible in order to be cost-effective. The Twelve could not support the financing of a secretariat of the size described in the report and they looked forward to the views of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the matter.

40. The Twelve were very disappointed at the delay in implementing of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/236 relating to institutional arrangements and suggested that the establishment of the special high-level council called for in the International Framework should be reconsidered. The difficulties experienced in starting up the Decade and the apparent lack of co-ordination within the secretariat might lead the Governments of some members of the European Community to reconsider their financial contributions to the Decade. It was unfortunate that the extrabudgetary funds secured thus far had been used for administrative expenses and subsistence allowances.

41. The Twelve looked forward to helping to formulate a clearer resolution of the Decade during the current session of the General Assembly and hoped that that text would facilitate the co-ordinated implementation of Decade activities and encourage the provision of co-operation and financial support from the donor community.

42. Mr. KOZYREV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Government of the Soviet Union and the Governments of republics affected making every effort to respond in a well-co-ordinated and effective manner to the after-effects of the tragic accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Large-scale operations were under way to resettle people living in contaminated areas, build new towns and villages, improve health care and provide adequate foodstuffs and essential goods and services.

43. The multilateral efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident demonstrated the tremendous potential of the United Nations for developing co-operation in a variety of fields. Several international organizations had already joined in the efforts to resolve Chernobyl-related issues. At the request of the Soviet Union, IAEA was conducting an expert assessment of the situation in affected areas of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia. The Soviet Union was also pursuing co-operation programmes with UNEP, UNESCO, WHO and other agencies. A letter of intent had been signed with WHO to set up an international centre on radiation and medical problems, and the large-scale humanitarian campaign, "Solidarity with the Children of Chernobyl", had been launched in the summer of 1990 in Western Europe with the participation of UNESCO.

44. The increasing involvement of United Nations agencies in Chernobyl-related activities was highly useful, and the Soviet Union hoped that those activities would be conducted in a well-co-ordinated and efficient manner. In that regard, it was important to establish from the very outset an administrative and

(Mr. Kozыrev, USSR)

organizational framework which would avoid duplication, unnecessary expenses and the dissipation of resources. For its part, the Soviet Union would do everything possible to ensure the maximum effectiveness of international efforts.

45. The report of the Secretary-General (A/45/643) contained a comprehensive and objective assessment of the situation and a useful survey of the work being carried out by the United Nations system. The consistent and full implementation of the recommendations contained in the report was a sine qua non for the success of United Nations activities to mitigate the consequences of the disaster.

46. In the next few days, Member States would begin consultations on a draft resolution on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The Soviet Union welcomed the positive response and willingness of many countries to sponsor the draft, and called upon Member States which had not yet done so to consider sponsoring the draft.

47. Mr. Chin-Min LEE (World Health Organization) reported that WHO had agreed with the Ministry of Health of the Soviet Union to establish a long-term programme to mitigate the health effects in the people exposed to the Chernobyl accident. The programme would focus on health of the people in the affected areas in Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia, and would emphasize the clinical aspects, with special priority given to medical investigation, treatment of the people exposed and the prevention of certain diseases. The programme would also deal with indirect medical problems brought about by a disaster of such magnitude, for example mental and psychological disturbances, nutritional problems and various aspects of medical rehabilitation. In addition, long-term epidemiological studies and other research would be carried out. All countries would be able ultimately to make use of the study's clinical and scientific knowledge concerning radiation effects gathered by the study. The implementation of the programme would be facilitated through an international centre to be established in the city of Obninsk, located in the affected area of Russia, where the Soviet Union would provide space for buildings and support services.

48. In October 1990, the Scientific Advisory Committee for the programme had held its first meeting in Hiroshima, in collaboration with the Radiation Effects Research Foundation located there. The Committee had reviewed the objectives and proposed activities of the international programme, including the proposed centre, and had made recommendations on its objectives, priorities and implementation. Feeling that the unique exposure circumstances following the accident were of great international scientific and medical importance, and that adoption of a single programme could facilitate the co-ordination of Chernobyl-associated health studies, the Committee had recommended that the proposed international centre at Obninsk be established, as a co-ordinating and information-providing facility. A major element of the international programme would be long-term epidemiological studies on the occurrence of cancer. The WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer was already involved in the initial planning stage.

(Mr. Chin-Min Lee, WHO)

49. WHO would need co-operation in the areas falling within the competence of other specialized agencies, in particular IAEA, and was naturally ready to render assistance to other international organizations in the health area. WHO was an active participant in the work of IAC/RNA which had been set up four years earlier following the accident at Chernobyl. The Committee had not only dealt with the planning of co-ordinated actions to be taken in the event of a future possible accident, but had also been a useful forum to discuss follow-up activities.

50. WHO was co-operating with IAEA and other agencies in the soon-to-be-completed assessment of the accident. It had also provided medical expertise for various health assessment missions. The international programme was to be discussed by the WHO Executive Board in January 1991, and it was expected that the Executive Board's recommendations would be considered further by the World Health Assembly in May 1991.

51. Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/643 showed how much had been achieved by the international community in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. However, much work still lay ahead, and the main purpose of the current debate was to seek a central focus for the action taken by various organizations in the wake of that disaster. Paragraph 82 of the report indicated the need for such an integrated approach.

52. The situation in the Byelorussian SSR following the Chernobyl accident was extremely grave. New information had just come to light, revealing much higher levels of radioactive contamination than had previously been suspected. Much of the Minsk region was contaminated, showing caesium-137 levels of over 5 Ci/km²; while in one district, levels of over 15 Ci/km² had been recorded. Furthermore, it was now known that many more isotopes had penetrated the human organism. Five out of the 6 regions of Byelorussia had been affected, and only 1 per cent of the territory remained wholly uncontaminated. Scientific research was also revealing new post-Chernobyl factors, suggesting that the full extent of the disaster had yet to dawn upon the world.

53. The Byelorussian SSR was already co-operating with a number of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, and also with IAEA, and had concluded a number of agreements on various forms of co-operation. It had received several missions sent by those agencies to study the situation on site, including the special United Nations mission. He stressed that all information at his country's disposal was available to the international community for study and consideration. One of the most important lessons to be learned from the tragedy was the need for such openness of information, and his country was ready to expand its co-operation with all international bodies, non-governmental organizations, scientific and business circles and individuals, for that purpose. In particular, it was prepared to co-operate bilaterally on a mutually beneficial basis. The programme of transition to a market economy, implementation of which had begun on 1 November 1990, contained provision for a system of benefits, including customs tariffs, available to foreign partners participating in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Byelorussian SSR)

54. The ongoing activities of the international organizations were assisting in the accumulation and dissemination of important international experience, establishing the basis for a future global system of response to major disasters. Those activities were focused on evaluation of population exposure to radiation, introduction of a system for global monitoring of nuclear and radiological accidents, determination of levels of radionuclide contamination of foodstuffs, methods of large-scale soil decontamination, studies of leukaemia among children, and the long-term effects of prolonged exposure to radiation.

55. The Chernobyl accident could not be viewed as the problem of just one nation. Concerted action by the international community was imperative. An integrated international programme of co-operation would enable international organizations to carry out activities within their own terms of reference and to co-ordinate their activities, thus eliminating duplication, inefficiency and the squandering of resources. A special voluntary fund could also play a useful role. The Secretary-General could be given the task of putting such a programme in place. In particular, he might designate a programme co-ordinator and establish a task force within the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination, to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident. His delegation, together with the delegations of the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR, would continue to hold broad consultations with a view to working out an appropriate draft resolution.

56. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) pointed out that in the past 20 years alone, natural calamities had taken the lives of approximately 3 million people and caused suffering for 800 million more. Japan, a country prone to earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis and floods, naturally attached great importance to prevention and preparedness. Having been working on that topic at the United Nations since 1987, Japan had been particularly gratified at the proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction the previous January. Noting with satisfaction that an increasing number of countries had established national committees to promote and implement Decade activities and programmes, he expressed the hope that all nations would include disaster mitigation as part of their national programmes. A conference on the subject, held in Japan the previous month, had been attended by approximately 1,300 experts from governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organs. It had confirmed the need for every country to strengthen its capacity to meet disasters, and in particular had emphasized the importance of establishing a disaster mitigation network and the need to increase public awareness about disaster prevention. As part of its public information effort, Japan had issued a special postage stamp in commemoration of the Decade.

57. Japan was disappointed to see that virtually nothing had yet been done in terms of concrete activities. For example, the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, proclaimed by resolution 44/233, had simply not been observed by the United Nations. Although the scientific and technical committee had just been formed, it was not yet functioning. It should do so without further delay. The Committee must be action-oriented and produce practical results, and should start by formulating a framework programme for the Decade. It was also regrettable

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

that the special high-level council had not yet been formed. Japan strongly hoped that the organizational arrangements could be completed without further delay.

58. The Decade secretariat must maintain close co-operation with UNDRO. Japan expressed a concern about the current status of that relationship, although it was fully confident that the Director-General would ensure that the situation was rectified as soon as possible. The activities of the Decade were to be financed by extrabudgetary contributions, but funding from the donor community would depend on donor confidence in the work of the Decade. The present situation thus posed very real problems.

59. Japan was committed to the Decade and its objectives, believing firmly that the momentum achieved so far should not be allowed to diminish, and that the International Framework of Action adopted the previous year should be implemented. Japan called on all Member States for efforts to ensure the success of the significant international endeavour.

60. The disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant posed a challenge that simply could not be ignored. Japan hoped that it would prompt the world community as a whole to work to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster. It was of paramount importance that the subject should be studied thoroughly, as the world was increasingly relying on nuclear power. The Secretary-General's report entitled "International co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant" (A/45/643) gave a comprehensive and very clear picture of the activities currently under way or planned within the United Nations system.

61. It was very encouraging to learn that within their respective mandates the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents (IAC/RNA), IAEA, and in particular its International Advisory Committee, and other related agencies had undertaken activities to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident.

62. Having suffered the effects of the atomic bomb, Japan felt profound sympathy for all whose lives had been so tragically changed by the accident at Chernobyl, as well as concern about the accident's possible long-term effects on human health and the environment. In consequence, Japan would continue to assist in efforts to address the consequences of the accident, utilizing its unique expertise in the field.

63. In addition, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Soviet Union had signed a memorandum calling for reciprocal visits by Japanese and Soviet experts to facilitate fact-finding and co-operation. It was hoped that such bilateral arrangements would contribute to the essential endeavours of objective and scientific data collection, analysis and assessment.

64. Mr. SADEGHI-TEHRANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was discouraging to note from the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/621) that the Trust Fund for the Decade had not yet received sufficient contributions.

65. The earthquake that had struck the north-west of Iran on 21 June 1990 had killed about 50,000 people, injured 60,000, and made half a million homeless, as well as destroying major economic and social infrastructures. In response to the catastrophe, a relief task force had been set up, to co-ordinate national administrative, military and public relief efforts. Those efforts had been matched by a touching international response. On 6 July, the General Assembly had adopted a draft resolution on the issue, appealing to Governments, the United Nations system and the specialized agencies to extend generous assistance to the victims of the disaster. Many countries had responded to that appeal.

66. Although the emergency relief stage was now over, the crucial task of reconstruction still lay ahead. Short-term emergency assistance was not sufficient to address a task of such magnitude. Reconstruction of 15 cities and hundreds of villages was beyond the capacities of a developing country. In addition, scientific planning was needed, in order to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster. The task of planning and execution called for co-operation and assistance on the part of the specialized agencies as well as Member States. The Government was preparing a master plan for reconstruction of the affected areas. Priority had been given to resettlement of the survivors, and a plan for reconstruction of the housing sector had been drawn up in co-operation with Habitat, UNDRU and UNDP. That project could also serve as a basis for continued international assistance to the victims of the disaster.

67. Mr. VAN BRAKEL (Canada) said that the issue of addressing and mitigating the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl power plant presented the Committee with a number of different challenges. The first was a technical and scientific one: to gauge exactly what the consequences of the accident were. Before decisions could be taken to deal with the unprecedented situation, scientific and technical assessments were required to determine what needed to be done and to identify the problems attributable to the accident rather than to other factors.

68. At the same time, it had to be recognized that more than four years had elapsed since the accident, and the sense of urgency felt by those in the affected regions was understandable. Canada welcomed the valuable work being done by IAEA in co-ordinating a wide-ranging assessment of the radiological consequences of the accident, which was nearing completion, and the important work undertaken by WHO on its long-term health implications.

69. The second challenge to be faced was a political one: once the scientific assessments had been completed, it was necessary to determine the most appropriate follow-up and to mobilize the necessary resources. A central focus for co-ordination was required, and priorities must be established. The latter task was particularly important in order to achieve an appropriate match between the needs identified and the availability of resources to deal with them. However, Canada was not convinced that a new structure was required. The task could be accomplished within existing United Nations institutions.

(Mr. Van Brakel, Canada)

70. The crucial importance of public education and communication should not be underestimated. Information was an area in which the United Nations, in co-operation with the scientific and technical agencies, could do much to ease the anxieties and concerns so acutely felt by people in the affected areas.

71. It had been suggested that a special fund should be established to deal with the situation. Canada had reservations on such a project, being unconvinced that it would attract adequate new money. The principal and most realistic contribution which the international community could provide was expertise in helping to assess the situation and in recommending courses of local action, as well as suggestions on how the international community could support such local action.

72. Canada commended the efforts being undertaken by national authorities in close collaboration with the IAEA to improve all aspects of nuclear safety, in particular the recently established programme to assess and, where necessary, upgrade the safety of certain older reactor types.

73. Mrs. DUEÑAS de WHIST (Ecuador) said that while all countries were to some extent exposed to the forces of nature, the burden of mitigation, assistance and reconstruction fell particularly heavy on the developing countries. Better knowledge of the nature of disasters, scientific and technical advances and discoveries, and a better understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of natural phenomena and their effects had led to an awareness of the need for prevention.

74. Disaster prevention was as important as disaster mitigation. Both activities called for education, training and information on systems for evacuation, rescue and first aid. It was the most vulnerable sectors of the population that were most affected by natural phenomena. After the March 1987 earthquakes in Ecuador, UNDRO had acted promptly and dynamically to overcome shortfalls in personnel and resources, and had played a particularly valuable role in management of the information network and co-ordination with local non-governmental organizations and the national administration.

75. In view of the marked increase in the number of natural disasters during 1989, it was all the more surprising that, far from being expanded, the staff of UNDRO had in fact been cut back. If UNDRO's management capacity was reduced, the populations most exposed to natural disasters would suffer in consequence.

76. Early in 1990, in collaboration with UNDRO, the Government of Ecuador had embarked on a global programme of preventive planning and disaster relief, which might have to be abandoned if the necessary expertise was not forthcoming. The first stage of the programme had been satisfactorily completed, and had led to the establishment of multisectoral techniques for disaster prevention and relief, with the active participation of the populations involved.

77. In April 1990, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had held a seminar in Quito, to study disaster prevention and relief methods and mechanisms for international co-ordination of information, data compilation, and organization of international humanitarian aid, particularly in the regional context.

(Mrs. Dueñas de Whist, Ecuador)

78. UNDRO must have the capacity to react almost instantaneously to disasters. It needed specific resources and flexible accounting procedures, for rescue operations could not be held up pending the completion of bureaucratic formalities. The General Assembly should thus envisage an increase in the contingency fund from \$US 20,000 to \$US 50 000 for each country, with authorization for immediate use of those funds. In that regard, her delegation requested the Secretary-General to provide information on the measures adopted to facilitate UNDRO's application of the rules for general procurement.

79. In order to secure the participation of the population concerned in disaster prevention and relief, a permanent collective information and communication mechanism was required. Indeed, the success of disaster relief depended in large measure on the quality and timeliness of that information and communication. Her Delegation therefore hoped that the United Nations administration would be able to assign the necessary financial resources to enable UNDRO to fulfil that important task.

80. She underscored the need for the Decade secretariat to be incorporated in the present structure of UNDRO, and for it to report through UNDRO and in close collaboration with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. Her delegation did not favour the establishment of a new bureaucratic structure, which might divert resources and energy that could be better channelled towards programmes to benefit the victims of disasters, and thus, indirectly, the development process.

81. In conclusion, she announced that in June 1990 her Government had decided to set up a High-level Committee for the mitigation of natural disasters. Her delegation also reiterated the willingness of her Government to host the regional office for execution of programmes relating to the Decade.

82. Mr. MARKS (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Recent devastating natural disasters had drawn attention to the importance of disaster preparedness. Regarding the report of the Secretary-General, his delegation would have welcomed more rapid progress in the establishment of the special high-level council and scientific and technical committee, and hoped that the organizational arrangements, one year after the Decade's adoption, would not be delayed further. With respect to the IDNDR secretariat, his delegation favoured a very lean organizational structure, well-conceived work plans and an appropriate relationship with UNDRO and other agencies. Its funding should be secured from extrabudgetary resources. His delegation wished to associate itself with the remarks of the representative of the European Economic Community.

83. Turning to the Chernobyl disaster, he said that the presentations by the representatives of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Soviet Union had made it clear that the United Nations system must participate in the disaster response, by providing assistance to Governments and suffering populations. It

(Mr. Marks, United States)

could also contribute to the study of the accident's effects, to ensure that the lessons learned would be made available to all. The United Nations must make its contribution, however, with the most effective use of resources.

84. He welcomed the very thorough report prepared by the Secretary-General noting, however, that its recommendations were not yet sufficiently defined for formal adoption, and required further discussion.

85. The Secretary-General must use his considerable authority to urge all members of IAC/RNA to make full use of that mechanism. Proposals for new activities should be submitted to a supervising and co-ordinating body. His Government was committed to working with the governing bodies of the organizations of which it was a member, and urged other Governments to follow suit. Existing structures of the United Nations system should be utilized to the greatest extent possible, to avoid dispersing energy and limited resources. For example, an existing body such as IAC/RNA might be able to carry out the activities which it was proposed in paragraph 149 should be assigned to a task force. Responsibility should be placed on the Secretary-General for the use of resources already available to ensure co-ordination within the United Nations system.

86. Mr. KULKARNI (India) said that in recent years, developing countries seemed to have borne the brunt of natural disasters. In countries with fragile economies, such disasters had set back the development process. Disaster preparedness could often do much to reduce their impact, however. Early warning systems must be established in developing countries, in addition to building capacity to assess, predict, prevent and mitigate natural disasters through dissemination of information, technology transfer, education and training. Assessment and prediction of disasters was a complex process, but it could have additional rewards in the environmental sector. Many disasters were caused by man's reckless disregard for the environment.

87. General Assembly resolution 44/236 should be fully implemented without further delay. The objectives of the Decade could be achieved only through concerted action. Disaster prevention and mitigation should be integrated into country development plans. Participation by all the specialized agencies of the United Nations as well as other important elements of the private sector was also necessary.

88. The Decade secretariat had existed for only a few months; therefore, criticism was premature. Every major effort deserved a chance to succeed. In conclusion, his delegation fully agreed with the concept that development in itself increased the capacity of a country to deal with natural disasters; therefore, policies supportive of development could, given the necessary orientation, assist in disaster prevention.

89. Mr. Papadatos (Greece) resumed the Chair.

90. Mrs. TIKANVAARA (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the consequences of the Chernobyl accident had extended beyond the Soviet Union into several other countries, including the Nordic countries. At the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council for 1990, the Nordic countries had stressed the need to achieve the highest standards of safety in countries with nuclear energy programmes. They fully supported the work of IAEA in developing international safety principles, regulations and guidelines.

91. The Nordic countries saw a need for better co-ordination and strengthening of the United Nations system in order to provide the fullest support possible to efforts of national committees for the Decade recently established in the Soviet Union and its republics directly affected by Chernobyl. They called for a generous response by the international community to the financial requirements of the United Nations system, for ongoing as well as new activities.

92. Mr. NINOV (Bulgaria) said that international co-operation in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident was not only a humanitarian contribution but also an opportunity for gathering experience for combating similar disasters. Such a venture required colossal technical, scientific and organizational resources which no single country possessed. The ideas put forward in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/643 provided a good basis for consolidating the efforts, experience and technological potential of States in that connection. The Secretary-General had already made an important contribution by mobilizing the efforts of the international community and the relevant United Nations specialized agencies to cope with the consequences of the disaster. He closed his statement by reiterating his country's readiness to join with other nations in their attempts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to devise approaches and measures to avert similar disasters in the future.

93. Mr. ISAKSSON (UNESCO) noted that UNESCO had played an active role in international efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and said that, at the meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) at Vienna in May 1990, the Director-General of UNESCO had stated that UNESCO was prepared to participate in the IAEA project to assess the radiological damage resulting from the accident. At the same time, the Director-General had announced that a UNESCO mission had been sent to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to discuss the formulation of a project in line with decisions taken by the USSR Supreme Soviet to launch a unified programme to mitigate the consequences of the accident. The project had been discussed at a meeting of IAC/RNA and the decision had been taken to include it in the overall activities proposed by the United Nations system in response to the appeal for assistance in connection with Chernobyl. An initial agreement between UNESCO and the USSR had been signed on 1 June 1990 with a view to establishing and implementing a programme of assistance within the fields of competence of UNESCO. The tasks to be carried out under the programme included the preparation of a report in conjunction with the other United Nations agencies concerned and relevant institutions in the USSR to serve as the basis for a conference which could be organized at the end of 1991.

(Mr. Isaksson, UNESCO)

94. A programme had been launched in July 1990 to enable children orphaned by the Chernobyl accident or victims of it to spend their summer holidays in Western Europe. As the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to UNESCO had been reported as saying after the arrival of the first group of children in France, the venture should contribute to the building of a united Europe.

95. In October 1990, the Executive Board of UNESCO had unanimously adopted a resolution on the Chernobyl disaster, in which the Director-General was requested to consider the desirability of including in UNESCO's draft programme and budget for 1992-1993 a special project aimed at developing international co-operation with a view to contributing to the elimination of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, and Member States, international organizations and national and private bodies were urged to continue giving every possible form of encouragement to international co-operation to eliminate the consequences of the disaster. The Director-General had accordingly prepared a UNESCO Chernobyl programme in all the fields of competence of the Organization, comprising activities in a diverse range of disciplines.

96. UNESCO had been deeply touched by the special thanks extended to it by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR for having "reached out so movingly to Chernobyl's children" and was committed to doing exactly that. He assured the delegations of the three countries affected that UNESCO would leave no stone unturned in pursuing its activities in connection with Chernobyl.

97. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that the unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/236 reflected the importance which the international community attached to concerted measures to reduce the effects of natural calamities and its strong political resolve to realize the goals of the Decade, which were of special significance to countries like his own where natural disasters caused heavy losses in terms of human lives and property.

98. For quite some time the Government of Bangladesh had been engaged in the formulation of national programmes for disaster mitigation, including the establishment of a national disaster prevention council headed by the country's President. The activities of the Council focused on the co-ordination of government plans, programmes and action in connection with natural disaster forecasts, management and relief and post-disaster rehabilitation work. A comprehensive disaster policy, in which stress was laid on disaster preparedness, on the one hand, and relief and rehabilitation, on the other, had been adopted. Other goals were to strengthen local activities, to enhance public awareness and to improve emergency health-care capacities. Such activities were fully reflected in the country's medium-term development plan for the period 1990-1995. Disaster management was a major theme of the fifth UNDP country programme for Bangladesh, and the World Bank's action plan for flood control in Bangladesh, which was currently in implementation, would constitute a giant step towards a lasting solution to the flood problem. Other United Nations programmes and organizations had also been co-operating with the Government in connection with disaster-related operations, as envisaged in the International Framework of Action for the Decade,

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

in which the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system were urged to accord priority to natural disaster preparedness, prevention, relief and short-term recovery. In that connection, he noted that the Secretary-General's report (A/45/621) failed to address the co-ordination of United Nations natural disaster reduction activities. Co-ordination enhanced the efficiency, effectiveness and complementarity of United Nations programmes, and his delegation believed that it was crucial for the success of the Decade to give consideration to ways of co-ordinating the activities undertaken.

99. His delegation shared the view expressed at the recent joint ACC/CPC meeting that the United Nations capacities for dealing with disasters should be carefully assessed in the light of the objectives of the Decade. The organizational arrangements envisaged in the International Framework of Action were central to the success of the Decade. His delegation had already expressed concern at the lack of progress in instituting those arrangements. It was gratified that the composition of the Scientific and Technical Committee had in the meantime been announced and hoped that the special high-level council called for in the resolution would be established promptly. Member States had intended that the secretariat for the Decade should work in close association with UNDRO, which served as the focal point for disaster-related activities within the United Nations system and had played a major role in the preparatory phase of the Decade. The IDNDR secretariat should make full use of the substantive capabilities within the United Nations system and should report through UNDRO. He hoped the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would take those views into consideration when it made its recommendations concerning the IDNDR secretariat. Developing countries, particularly those vulnerable to disaster, should be well represented on its staff. His delegation called for voluntary contributions to the activities of the Decade and hoped that the momentum built up in connection with them would not be allowed to decelerate further.

100. Mr. CORNFORD (World Meteorological Organization) said the world's attention should now be focused on the range of problems to be dealt with during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). Because of the large number of deaths caused by weather-related disasters, WMO felt that it should adopt a leading role in disaster prevention and mitigation and in ensuring that the national meteorological and hydrological services of its members had the capacity to keep extreme weather events from becoming human disasters, and that when they did result in disaster, loss of life, bodily injuries and property damage were kept to a minimum. WMO also wished to ensure that the organizers of rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations were assisted by meteorological and hydrological advice.

101. Those goals could be met by helping Governments to raise the standards of their national meteorological and hydrological services, many of which could still benefit from recent advances in meteorology. Governments would heed meteorological advice received in times of disaster once they had learned in normal times to have confidence in its source. Success also depended upon preparedness and warning systems. While over a thousand deaths from hurricanes had occurred in the United States in each of the first four decades of the twentieth century, in recent

(Mr. Cornford, WMO)

decades, the number of deaths had amounted to only one eighth of the earlier figure as a result of improved forecasting and warning systems and increased public, official and media awareness and co-operation. In other parts of the world, the establishment of tropical cyclone and typhoon committees had also proved to be effective. It was essential that governments and the United Nations system should recognize that although extreme weather events were inevitable, disasters could be minimized. It was one of the few cases where a realistic approach justified the taking of an optimistic attitude.

102. The importance attached by WMO to IDNDR was reflected in the fact that the Organization had made the Decade the theme of its World Meteorological Day in 1990. The Secretary-General of WMO had emphasized the need for an effective but independent collaborative secretariat for the Decade. Although he had expressed some disappointment at the weak impact had by the Decade during its first six months, he had announced that WMO was appointing a second senior officer to the IDNDR team. WMO believed that confidence in and support of the aims of the Decade and appropriate funding for it would help it to succeed.

103. Mr. ROSEN (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that IAEA had been involved in international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant since the days immediately following the accident. The Agency's early efforts in that connection had included a visit by the Director-General to the scene of the accident during the month immediately following its occurrence, the organization of a post-accident conference, the adoption of a convention on early notification of a nuclear accident and a convention on assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency and the establishment of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents (IAC/RNA).

104. The very serious economic, social and political consequences of the accident had been compounded by uncertainty concerning the real health and environmental situation. In response to that uncertainty, IAEA had initiated an intensive, one-year project to examine environmental contamination and human radiation exposure and to evaluate measures to protect the population. An international advisory committee, chaired by the Director of the Radiation Effects Research Foundation at Hiroshima, had been established to direct the project and prepare the final report on it. Membership of that interdisciplinary committee included 19 scientists from 8 countries and 5 international organizations. More than 100 independent experts from 25 countries and 7 international organizations had participated in the field work for the project, which had been carried out during a 6-month period and had involved visits by 40 technical missions to the affected regions. During that time 8,000 individual personal dosimeter readings had been effected, and an additional 4,000 dosimeters were currently being worn by inhabitants of the affected area; 10,000 whole-body measurements had been taken, 2,800 medical examinations had been conducted, 2,000 environmental dose rate measurements had been taken, 1,000 air, soil, grass and food samples had been obtained and 500 square kilometers had been surveyed for radioactive particles. A series of seminars had been conducted, including three-day medical seminars

(Mr. Rosen, IAEA)

attended by 1,200 local doctors, a special seminar on techniques for animal decontamination and four one-day agricultural seminars. A series of two-day conferences for key decision makers had been held in each Republic affected. The project data was currently being evaluated, a summary report of the findings would be presented early in 1991, and IAEA would publish the committee's final report.

105. In May 1990, IAC/RNA had met to discuss the response to numerous requests for assistance in mitigating the effects of the Chernobyl accident and had agreed to work towards the implementation of Chernobyl-related projects. Its co-ordinating role had been underscored by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/50. In September 1990 the Committee had met again to discuss the co-ordination of Chernobyl-related projects and had adopted a paper in that connection. At its next meeting it would be briefed on the results of the IAEA project. He suggested that the Committee could assist the Secretary-General by providing a focal point for international efforts, examining project proposals and identifying agencies for project co-ordination.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.