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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. BURKE

(Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 89: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.13

Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.13, and said that the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session marked a very important stage, for it provided the international community with an opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of the developing countries. The draft resolution submitted under agenda item 89 called upon Member States to take measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration. Paragraph 3 would have the General Assembly decide to keep the implementation of the Declaration under political review at its forty-seventh session, and an ad hoc committee of the whole would be established for that purpose. In addition, the Secretary-General was requested to provide an analytical report of the steps taken by the Governments of various categories of countries, as well as by organs and organizations of the United Nations system, towards implementation of their commitments under the Declaration. He hoped that the draft resolution would receive the support of all members of the Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.15

Mr. SERSALE di CERISANO (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.15 on regional economic cooperation among developing countries on behalf of his own country, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruquay. The main theme of the draft resolution, which related to the implementation of paragraph 34 of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, was in keeping with the MERCOSUR Treaty establishing a common market between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay - the text of which had been transmitted to the Secretary-General as document A/46/155 - and with his country's report on measures adopted in relation to growth and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels (A/46/159). The draft resolution called for specific measures to facilitate regional economic integration among developing countries, as a first step towards interregional cooperation, in the context of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which was to consider certain key issues with a view to helping to strengthen multilateral cooperation. Regional integration should be viewed as a means rather than an end in itself, and the countries sponsoring the draft resolution were preparing themselves for integration in the world economy. The United Nations should systematically support such activities to promote regional economic integration and should,

(Mr. Sersale di Cerisano, Argencina)

<u>inter alia</u>, facilitate investment flows between countries by creating appropriate machinery through the various regional commissions. He urged the members of the Committee to support the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 87: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO STUDY, MITIGATE AND MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISASTER AT CHERNOBYL (A/46/82-E/1991/14, A/46/163, A/46/215/Rev.1-E/1991/76/Rev.1, A/46/273, A/46/283-E/1991/114, A/46/345, A/46/477, A/46/501 and A/46/520)

- 3. <u>Miss ANSTEE</u> (Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna, United Nations Coordinator for international cooperation for Chernobyl) said that much had been done since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/190 several months earlier. As indicated in his report (A/46/215/Rev.1), the Secretary-General had appointed her as Coordinator, and she worked with a tiny secretariat; an Inter-Agency Task Force had been established and a Joint Plan had been drawn up in collaboration with the authorities of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and the USSR, and its final version, prepared in consultations with the Task Force, had been circulated to all Member States in July 1991; finally, a Chernobyl Pledging Conference had been held on 20 September 1991.
- 4. Quite naturally, the preparation of the Joint Plan had been the focus of attention, and had required very close cooperation, not only between the four Governments concerned, but also between them and the various United Nations bodies and organs which were involved. The task had not been an easy one, owing to the complexities inherent in the Chernobyl tragedy itself, and had been compounded by the political upheavals of recent months.
- The objective of the Pledging Conference had been to secure financing for 5. the 131 projects contained in the Joint Plan; those projects, in keeping with the interest expressed by certain delegations, focused on such fields as nuclear safety, the cleaning up of contaminated areas, the environmental consequences of nuclear fall-out, the effects of radiation on children and, in particular, the economic and social impact of the disaster. The Conference should by no means be considered an end in itself. Its purpose had been to give Member States the opportunity to respond to the appeal they themselves had made in General Assembly resolution 45/190 so as to ensure the optimum use of all contributions for priority programmes and projects. A United Nations Chernobyl Trust Fund had been established to that end, but she could overemphasize that there was a need for other types of aid (whether bilateral or from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the business community, scientific bodies, and even individuals). Contributions in kind also could be made, for example, in the form of equipment. However, she expressed the hope that all the contributions would be used for the implementation of projects included in the Joint Plan and that she would be informed of each contribution so that she could monitor all aspects of the financing and implementation of the Plan and keep the General Assembly informed.

(Miss Anstee)

- 6. Several delegations at the Pledging Conference had cited the assessment of the radiological consequences of the accident prepared by an international advisory committee. Some had recommended that the international community should be guided by its conclusions. It was clear that the report supported the need for socio-economic assistance for the victims of the accident and that it could not serve as a pretext for refusing any kind of assistance. It should be noted that the study referred only to health and radiological aspects in areas still inhabited at the end of 1990, and did not take into account the disaster's impact on people who had been evacuated or on those involved in the clean-up operations. Lastly, the study showed that the people investigated suffered from serious psychological problems.
- 7. The authors of the assessment certainly would agree on the need for the organization of a public information campaign to raise awareness among the population of the effects of radiation on health, epidemiological studies of the long-term effects of low-level radiation doses, the application of technologies for the decontamination of agricultural land and the training of medical personnel in the use of equipment and techniques for diagnosis and treatment. Projects in those fields had been included in the Joint Plan.
- 8. It was clear that the dramatic events of August 1991 had been in the minds of delegations to the Pledging Conference; that partly explained why the announced pledges had been below the expected levels. However, it must not be forgotten that, in the view of many representatives of the four Governments concerned, the accident at Chernobyl had been a catalyst for the process of restructuring (perestroika) and openness (glasnost) and had increased the pull of centrifugal forces. It therefore followed that support for a coordinated programme to address the long-lasting economic and social consequences of the accident would help to develop closer cooperation. Member States therefore should heed the Secretary-General's appeal to continue to examine ways to finance the Joint Plan.
- 9. Lastly, the General Assembly must decide on future action and indicate what was required from the Secretariat. The resources allocated to her own secretariat had now run out, and she would be unable to continue her work without the assistance of at least two Professional and two General Service staff members.
- 10. In conclusion, she underscored the universal dimension of Chernobyl and recalled that, in a world with so much dangerous technology, an industrial accident could strike any country at any time.
- 11. Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the full impact of the Chernobyl accident on the health of the affected populations would not be fully known for years to come. In December 1990, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 45/190, in which it made an urgent appeal to all States Members of the international community to continue to provide all appropriate support and assistance to the

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

areas most affected by the accident. The European Community had made substantial contributions to the efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident by providing food, medicine, technical equipment to measure radiation, facilities for decontamination and technical advice. The European Community would continue its activities as long as necessary. In Europe, many non-governmental organizations had participated in the relief efforts.

- 12. The European Community welcomed the positive response to resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) regarding cooperation and coordination of efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident. An elaborate study on Chernobyl had just been published, and the data, conclusions and recommendations contained in it could provide guidelines for future cooperation in that area.
- 13. As a result of the international community's concerted approach, the Joint Plan had been drawn up and submitted by the Governments of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in consultation with the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl. The Plan provided a very useful indication of the assistance requirements, and it would be highly appreciated if the available data could be distributed to as many organizations as possible, including non-governmental organizations. While the Plan was not yet complete, it represented an initial phase in a constantly evolving process.
- 14. International cooperation in the field of nuclear safety must be strengthened. In 1990, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Community had adopted an important decision concerning technical assistance in the field of safety of nuclear installations. Discussions were currently taking place within the Community with a view to preparing a European energy charter.
- 15. At the Chernobyl Pledging Conference on 20 September 1991, the European Community had reaffirmed that it would continue to assist in the overall economic recovery of all regions affected by the Chernobyl disaster in order to contribute to the mitigation of the consequences of the accident.
- 16. Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that there was an urgent need for international solidarity to address the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, whose long-term effects had not yet been fully evaluated. Austria therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative that had led to the holding of the Chernobyl Pledging Conference on 20 September 1991.
- 17. At the Pledging Conference, the Austrian Government had indicated that it would contribute 50 million Austrian schillings to the construction of a hospital in Minsk for children suffering from cancer. Austria had also earmarked subsidies to several private charitable organizations for humanitarian assistance to the populations of Belarus that had been most severely affected by the accident.

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(Ms Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

- 18. Austria had taken note with interest of the comprehensive Joint Plan for international cooperation to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, and it would consider making additional contributions to international efforts to aid the victims of Chernobyl.
- 19. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that there was no longer any doubt that the Chernobyl accident had been a disaster without precedent in human history, and the radiological, biological and ecological consequences of the accident would not be alleviated for many years to come. Millions of inhabitants of the Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine were still exposed in varying degrees to the harmful effects of the accident.
- 20. The disaster had brutally demonstrated the interdependence and the fragility of the modern world, since a nuclear accident could not be limited in space. An awareness of the collective nature of the disaster, as well as noble humanitarian principles, had prompted the international community to support the efforts being carried out in the affected Republics to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.
- 21. The Soviet Union was sincerely grateful to the Secretary-General and the United Nations Coordinator for their tireless efforts and to the United Nations agencies that were helping to find solutions to the problems caused by the disaster. It also appreciated the assistance provided by States Members of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and private persons. His delegation underscored the importance of the projects carried out on a bilateral basis, in particular with Japan, the Netherlands and France.
- 22. Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/50 and 1991/51 had contributed to the strengthening of international cooperatmon in that area by setting out broad guidelines for such cooperation. Moreover, General Assonmity resolution 45/190 recommended specific measures that should be taken to mitigate the consequences of the accident.
- 23. While they greatly appreciated the support that they received from the United Nations system and the international community, the Soviet Union and the Republics affected by the accident were aware that they bore the principal responsibility for mitigating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Since May 1986, more than 25 billion roubles had been allocated for that purpose. A common programme dealing with a wide range of issues, such as medical and food assistance and the decontamination of the environment, had also been drawn up. Nevertheless, it had not yet been possible to improve substantially the situation in the affected regions since the scope of the consequences of the disaster were just beginning to be known, and it was clear that they could not be mitigated without mobilizing the broad support of the international community.
- 24. The Chernobyl Pledging Conference, held at United Nations Headquarters on 20 September 1991, had marked an important stage in the strengthening of

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, USSR)

international cooperation, and had facilitated the pooling of resources to help finance the programmes being carried out by many United Nations agencies. The Pledging Conference had also demonstrated that the international community was committed to supporting the United Nations in its efforts to mitigate the effects of the disaster. Those commitments had been accompanied by concrete proposals that the United Nations should take duly into account during the implementation of the Joint Plan for Chernobyl.

- 25. The Secretary-General's report on the question (A/46/215/Rev.1) contained detailed information as well as concrete proposals regarding measures to be taken. In that respect, particular attention should be given to the mobilization of resources from business circles and non governmental organizations and, in particular, to the smooth functioning of the United Nations Trust Fund for Chernobyl, the coordination of activities among United Nations agencies and between them and the authorities of the three affected Republics and of the Soviet Union, and the monitoring of the implementation of the Joint Plan. Those new activities would require additional resources.
- 26. The consideration of the item dealing with the Chernobyl disaster at the previous session of the General Assembly had taken place in an atmosphere of constructive cooperation and had resulted in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/190. It was to be hoped that that spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance would prevail at the current session and would lead to the adoption of a new draft resolution containing additional measures to strengthen international cooperation; that draft resolution would be submitted by the delegations of Belarus, Ukraine, and the Soviet Union.
- 27. Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Belarus) said that on 19 September 1991, Belarus had presented a tapestry entitled "Chernobyl" to the United Nations. That work of art, which had been completed in only nine months, gave original expression to all the tragic aspects of the Chernobyl disaster as well as to the anxieties and hopes of the Belarusian people affected by that event. The tapestry served also to demonstrate the gratitude of Belarus to the international community for the extensive support which it had provided.
- 28. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/215/Rev.1) bore eloquent testimony to the considerable efforts made by the organizations of the United Nations system to coordinate further international cooperation to study and mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The political will of States, expressed in General Assembly resolution 45/190, had led to tangible results in a very short time.
- 29. The Joint Plan for international long-term cooperation, drawn up by the Governments of the most seriously affected areas with the help of the United Nations Coordinator, had already received pledges at the Pledging Conference held on 20 September 1991. The Belarusian Government wished to convey its gratitude to all those who had responded generously to its appeal.

(Mr. Kraychanka, Belarus)

- 30. The expressions of solidarity and deliveries of food and medicine had helped reduce tension in the contaminated areas, but recent maps of areas with long-term radioactive contamination showed that a quarter of the Belarusian territory was affected, arousing new anxieties in the population. Those facts had been confirmed by international experts. Unfortunately, several years after the disaster, it was still impossible to make a precise assessment of contamination levels.
- 31. The results of the international assessment of the radiological consequences of the accident, organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), would be of critical importance for international cooperation on Chernobyl. Unfortunately, the report would not appear until April 1992, but the information already available indicated that the study was not exhaustive and failed to give a full picture of the consequences of the disaster. The Joint Plan was therefore of extreme importance. Whatever scientific conclusions were reached concerning the health of the exposed populations, it was evident that those people required both social protection from their State and international assistance. Nevertheless, the critical issues which had been considered by the international experts and other scientific groups provided a sound point of departure for more extensive studies and for the preparation of more specific measures to protect against and prevent radiological risks.
- 32. Belarus hoped that international cooperation in alleviating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster would be organized along three basic lines.
- 33. First, international support should be provided for the efforts of the three affected Republics and by the future Union of Sovereign States to create a special national infrastructure charged with the long-term solution of problems affecting the entire "Chernobyl space". In that respect, the Joint Plan provided the necessary guidelines for rationalizing and coordinating support aimed at tackling the full range of intricate medical, social, economic, environmental and humanitarian problems faced by the most severely affected areas. The international cooperation priorities identified in the Plan formed an integral part of the multilateral cooperation which had been approved by the Member States in decisions of the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system.
- 34. Secondly, the profound political and economic crisis in the former Soviet Union was seriously hampering the implementation of the programme, set up by the Union and the Republics, of urgent measures to overcome the consequences of the disaster. The exercise of human rights by the population of the "Chernobyl space", while guaranteed at the legislative level, was extremely problematic at the economic level. It was therefore necessary to grant emergency medical assistance and food aid to the population of the affected areas, and above all to children and the most vulnerable groups, with priority given to the provision of medical equipment and medicine.

(Mr. Kraychanka, Belarus)

- 35. Thirdly, long-term cooperation would be organized on the basis of mutual interest. International aid was not entirely altruistic. The international community, and the "nuclear community" in particular, would gain invaluable, experience from dealing with the consequences of a nuclear disaster. The price paid for the acquisition of that experience by the peoples of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia was incomparably higher than the sum of the expenses already incurred and anticipated in the form of humanitarian and technical assistance from donors and international organizations. Furthermore, a number of States were displaying great interest in the practical side-benefits they hoped to receive from the Chernobyl projects and programmes and were expressing their readiness to participate in those activities.
- 36. Belarus intended to proceed in accordance with certain principles. First, it would guarantee access to all information on the consequences of the disaster on condition that it should participate in measures to address the problems identified. All assessments, conclusions and recommendations by experts would be taken into account without prejudice. A wide range of structures and mechanisms for the coordination of all aspects of international cooperation on the Chernobyl question would be acceptable, and coordination between bilateral efforts and multilateral programmes and projects would continue to be encouraged. The aid and cooperation provided would be depoliticized, and, finally, such aid and support would gradually evolve from philanthropy to genuine partnership.
- 37. In conclusion, he stressed the necessity of maintaining and strengthening the coordination machinery for international Chernobyl-related cooperation that had been set up within the United Nations system, since such accidents could recur, and the latest incident at Chernobyl, on 11 October 1991, was an ominous reminder of that danger.
- 38. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukraine) said that the latest incident at Chernobyl demonstrated the importance of the matter under consideration. While that incident had had no disastrous consequences, it nevertheless demonstrated that the Chernobyl problem was an ongoing one that required constant attention from the international community. Serious consideration must therefore be given to the safety of nuclear power stations, and it would perhaps be advisable to develop international nuclear and radiation safety standards and to set up cooperation programmes with the eventual aim of creating an international centre whose services would be available to all countries.
- 39. The Chernobyl problem had struck Ukraine at a crucial moment in its history. Ukraine, which had become independent on 24 August 1991, was currently formulating its political, economic, social and cultural development strategy. All its efforts in those areas would be hampered by the Chernobyl problem, and the billions of roubles which would have to be spent annually to mitigate the effects of the disaster would be lost for education, public health and other social concerns. Furthermore, the Chernobyl problem would not be settled for a long time to come, and the costs that it would entail

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

were unlikely to diminish. The international community and the United Nations should take due account of that situation, in particular when determining Ukraine's contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations and to the budgets of other international organizations.

- 40. The current session of the General Assembly should usher in a new phase in international cooperation on Chernobyl. His delegation welcomed efforts by the United Nations and its organizations to promote the coordination of international assistance aimed at addressing the consequences of the accident. He wished to express his delegation's gratitude in that context to the Secretary-General for his initiatives and to the Director General of the United Nations Office at Vienna for her work as Coordinator. Those efforts had resulted in the establishment of the Joint Plan and the convening of the Chernobyl Pledging Conference. That Conference had demonstrated to Ukraine the growing solidarity of the States Members of the United Nations with the populations affected by the Chernobyl disaster.
- 41. His delegation also welcomed the vigorous action taken by various United Nations specialized agencies, including UNESCO, ILO and WHO. WHO, in particular, had adopted a programme to establish three centres which specialized in the radiation problems of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.
- 42. IAEA had launched an international project to assess the radiological consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and the protective measures taken in the past. His delegation could not agree with all the experts' findings, in particular, those relating to the accident's impact on the health of the affected populations. As the assessment was limited in nature, its findings could not be extrapolated and made to apply to all aspects of the Chernobyl problem. In his delegation's view, the study should be considered as the first step in a long series of in-depth studies devoted to the question.
- 43. The Ukrainian people greatly appreciated the assistance provided by various countries, including Italy, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia, in the form of medical equipment, food and various supplies. They were also grateful to many NGOs from various countries which had demonstrated their willingness to receive Ukrainian children.
- 44. The most pressing task was to protect the health of the people in the monitored areas, resettle the population in uncontaminated areas, conduct large-scale radiological and medical research and set up a computerized radiological monitoring system in contaminated areas. Groundwater must also be protected from any radioactive contamination. In the vicinity of Chernobyl considerable quantities of radioactive equipment and materials were buried underground. The waters of the Dnieper, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea could become contaminated. One of the most critical issues was that of the "sarcophagus": 180 tons of nuclear fuel were still trapped in an enormous concrete encasement. The help of experts from around the world would be necessary in order to resolve the problem. The Ukrainian Government had

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

decided to hold an international contest for projects designed to convert unit 4 of the Chernobyl power plant into an environmentally safe site. It invited all countries, organizations and individuals to participate in the contest.

- 45. In conclusion, he wished to inform the Committee that delegations from his country, the Ukraine, the Soviet Union and Belarus were currently holding informal consultations on a draft resolution to strengthen international cooperation and the coordination of efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. The draft resolution would be submitted at the current session of the General Assembly. It was hoped that Member States would consider it in a constructive spirit.
- 46. Mr. TANLAY (Turkey) said that, more than five years after the Chernobyl disaster, the extent of its consequences, particularly as concerned the environment, could still not be gauged. The risks of radiation had not been eliminated, even in the remotest regions of the condemned area. As the Secretary-General had emphasized in his report, the impact would continue to be felt for many more years, not only in the disaster area, but also by the world at large.
- 47. His delegation wished to express its concern over the seriousness of the human, health and environmental consequences of the accident and believed that strengthening international cooperation was essential to combating its aftermath. The adoption of resolution 45/190 by the General Assembly had greatly contributed to building such cooperation, whose objective should be not only to mitigate the consequences of the disaster, but also to find ways and means of preventing other accidents of that nature in future.
- 48. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) welcomed the efforts by the United Nations to implement General Assembly resolution 45/190 on mitigating the consequences of the accident. Chernobyl symbolized the need for the international community to cope with the frightening consequences of disasters caused by man's reliance on technology, but it should also become the symbol of international solidarity with those who suffered from its effects.
- 49. Brazil had been a sponsor of the resolutions submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the efforts of the international community to mitigate the consequences of the accident at the nuclear power plant. It supported the activities undertaken by the United Nations in search of solutions to the dramatic problems caused by the disaster and, in that regard, believed that the joint plan of international cooperation was a useful instrument for coordinating multilateral assistance and bilateral efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident.
- 50. Mr. LEE (World Health Organization) said that WHO had been concerned with the health consequences of the Chernobyl accident from the beginning. In May 1991, the World Health Assembly had endorsed the establishment, under the

(Mr. Lee, WHO)

auspices of WHO, of an International Programme to Mitigate the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident, specifying that it would be financed from voluntary contributions.

- 51. The programme had two main objectives. The first was to mitigate the health effects of the accident on the populations in the affected areas by focusing efforts on clinical examinations and the treatment of persons exposed to radiation. Indirect medical symptoms, including psychological disturbances, nutritional problems and other aspects of rehabilitation would also be addressed. The second objective was to gather scientific data and practical information on the effects of the radiation absorbed by persons exposed to it. The experience gained in the treatment of overexposure and from the assessment of various response measures should result in improved medical preparedness for radiological emergencies in the future. All Member States would have access to such information.
- 52. A number of pilot projects had been launched with resources provided by the Soviet Union and Japan earlier in the year. They dealt, inter alia, with the detection and treatment of leukaemia and thyroid disorders, and the assessment of the effects on the brains of children whose mothers had been exposed during pregnancy. Epidemiological research was also under way to study the long-term effects of radiation. Certain effects, such as susceptibility to cancer and genetic abnormalities, might become manifest only after they had been latent for several years. Two main strategies must be emphasized in connection with the Chernobyl accident: coordination and the mobilization of resources. The disaster had had consequences on many fronts. While health concerns were obviously of primary importance, there were other aspects to be dealt with, and close cooperation must be maintained among the various sectors involved. WHO was actively participating in the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Response to Nuclear Accidents and the United Nations Task Force dealing with the matter. Collaboration with bilateral donors and other international organizations was essential in order to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure the effective use of available resources and expertise. To that end, the coordination of all health-related projects through the WHO International Programme would be the optimal solution.
- 53. Implementation of the Programme required wide-ranging support in terms of both financial resources and technical expertise. It must be continued for at least several decades in view of the long-term nature of the health problems. Its success would depend not only on the financial support of Member States, but also on their willingness to contribute their scientific and technical expertise. The financial requirements to that end could already be estimated at \$150 to \$250 million for the 15 to 20 years ahead. The international community must coordinate its activities with national and local authorities in order to mitigate the consequences of the accident on the exposed populations and take advantage of the large body of scientific data available to it.

- 54. Mr. GANTCHEV (Bulgaria) said that his country shared the concern of the international community to overcome the effects of the Chernobyl disaster on the environment and people's health. Millions of people had been affected, particularly in Ukraine and Belarus, and thousands continued to suffer from the effects of increased radiation. Bulgaria, a country which had also been contaminated, was determined to participate actively in the efforts of the international community to mitigate and minimize the disastrous consequences of the accident. The question of nuclear safety was of particular importance for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Bulgaria had six power stations in operation, and their safety was an issue of considerable concern. The Bulgarian Government was aware of the problem and intended to set up a centre for radiation protection for the Balkan region. The aim of the project was to train experts and carry out research work on radiation protection and safety. Some steps had already been taken in that respect.
- 55. The United Nations programme on the Chernobyl disaster, in which Bulgaria certainly wished to participate, should contribute not only to mitigation of the consequences of the accident but also to the acquisition of experience in the elaboration of safety measures to protect against such disasters.
- 56. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) said that his country continued to be very concerned about the long-term effects of the Chernobyl accident on human health and the environment in the affected region. Japan had always promoted the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, for it was the only country in the world to have suffered the effects of the atomic bomb, and it felt deep sympathy for all the people affected by the accident; that was why it had been a sponsor of every one of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on that important issue.
- 57. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report, the Chernobyl accident had an international dimension, not only because its insidious effects had transcended national boundaries but also because its aftermath held important lessons for all countries in the world. The magnitude and gravity of the accident required the international community to respond in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity. The Joint Plan described the assistance needs in the economic and social areas; it should therefore serve as the basis for international cooperation in those sectors. As far as the radiological and scientific aspects of the accident were concerned, the report prepared by the International Advisory Committee of IAEA constituted the most authoritative and scientifically sound study currently available.
- 58. For its part, Japan had been doing its utmost to help the world community to take up the challenge; at the beginning of 1991 it had contributed approximately \$20 million to WHO for its activities in the region. It had also extended bilateral aid to the Soviet Union, and Japanese experts had participated in the research activities undertaken by such agencies as IAEA. It remained committed to the efforts of the international community to mitigate the effects of the Chernobyl disaster, both through bilateral channels and through the appropriate United Nations organizations.

- 59. Mr. ISAKSSON (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that UNESCO had responded immediately to the appeal of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Soviet Governments for assistance to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. It had prepared an action programme which included more than 60 projects dealing with education, science, social sciences, culture and communication.
- 60. In the field of science one main project was the establishment of an ecological sciences network within the framework of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme, which was designed to bring researchers together in order to pool information about the ecological consequences of the disaster. An international conference had also been scheduled for 1992, in collaboration with IAEA and the Economic Commission for Europe, on the impact of nuclear plants on water supplies. A research project on the role of the hydrological cycle in the transfer of radionucleids was also being launched.
- 61. In the field of education a foreign language teaching laboratory was being established at Minsk, with Belgian and French support, which would enable the professionals involved in the clean-up operations to have access to international scientific and technical information. An international centre for psychological rehabilitation was being established in Kiev for the basic purpose of training psychologists, especially for the benefit of children in rural areas. In that connection UNESCO was setting up three psycho-social rehabilitation centres for children victims of Chernobyl in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia; the project had already received financial support from Germany and Canada.
- 62. In the field of culture the main focus of the UNESCO Chernobyl Programme was to evaluate the impact of the catastrophe on the cultural heritage of the republics concerned and to propose appropriate action for restoration and preservation.
- 63. UNESCO had sent a field mission to evaluate the situation with respect to archives and propose measures for the conservation of stocks and the decontamination of important documents, as well as measures for the health of the personnel concerned.
- 64. To date, UNESCO had managed to raise approximately \$2 million in funds from various sources for projects in its Chernobyl Programme. That was a modest sum in view of the needs, but the organization would continue its efforts to mobilize resources. UNESCO participation in the international reconstruction effort was being closely coordinated with the efforts of all the other United Nations agencies involved, under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Task Force set up by the Administrative Committee on Coordination.
- 65. Mr. JASINSKI (Poland) said that the effects of the Chernobyl accident were still being felt and that it was as yet impossible to assess the accident's consequences. As one of the countries suffering the effects of the tragedy at Chernobyl, Poland hoped to see multilateral cooperation in that

(Mr. Jasinski, Poland)

area strengthened. Assessing the impact of that international catastrophe required intellectual, material and financial resources that could only be mobilized in a multilateral setting. Moreover, such cooperation would improve the coordination of activities, not only among international organizations, but also in the scientific community, thereby leading to broader exchanges of experience.

- specialized institutions and experts had been actively involved in the implementation of national and international programmes to deal with the aftermath of the accident. Polish engineers had designed equipment for measuring the radiological contamination of the air, which had aroused interest in Western European countries. Poland was also willing to participate in the development and implementation of the programme of action sponsored by the United Nations, and it had already identified a number of projects in the joint plan that might be entrusted to Polish experts. His delegation supported the participation of the United Nations Development Programme, as defined in Governing Council decision 91/23, and believed that consideration might be given to implementing joint plan projects as part of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.
- 67. Ms. O'DELL (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that IAEA had reacted immediately and forcefully to the catastrophe. Within months of the accident, the Agency had: organized a scientific review of the situation; adopted two conventions, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; formed the Inter-Agency Committee on Response to Nuclear Accidents; and established the Chernobyl Centre for International Research. Lastly, it had provided assistance on request.
- 68. Early in 1990, IAEA had organized an international project to evaluate the radiological consequences of the accident, the results of which had been published in May 1991. While the conclusions of the study which highlighted the social and economic difficulties of the people living in the areas affected by the catastrophe had been well received by Member States and the scientific community, they had been criticized by certain media organizations and by the authorities and scientific bodies of the affected Republics.
- 69. The assessment had been carried out not by IAEA alone but by some 200 independent experts from 25 countries, some of whom had been nominated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and WHO; the work had been overseca by an International Advisory Committee. IAEA had provided secretariat services, coordinated the work and arranged for the scientific review of the experts' findings.
- 70. The assessment's limited scope had been recognized by the International Advisory Committee, which had made proposals for future work aimed at studying problems not covered by the assessment. Because the need for guidelines for

(Ms. 0'Dell)

radiological protection of the populations living in the contaminated areas had been urgent, it had not been possible for the assessment to cover those who had been evacuated or the teams responsible for the decontamination of the accident zone.

71. Clearly, further research was necessary, not only on radiological and health problems, but also on the social and economic impact of the catastrophe. IAEA would continue to study those questions and to cooperate with other international organizations within its area of competence. The Agency's programme called for an assessment of the radiation doses received by emergency teams and evacuees and of the protection situation within the exclusion zone, and a study of such issues as radioactive particles. Execution of that programme was, of course, contingent on the agreement of the relevant Governments and would require extrabudgetary funding from Member States.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.