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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: priority theme: "Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons"**Statement submitted by the World Information Transfer, Inc., a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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"Respect for the value of health, education and social protection", one of the issues of the Expert Workshop on Ways and Means to Enhance Social Protection and Reduce Vulnerability must be recognized, in view of the specific and ongoing threat posed by Chernobyl-style RBMK nuclear reactors.

The countries formed after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union require special consideration due to their continued dependence on the Chernobyl-style RBMK nuclear reactors. The prolonged use of these power plants jeopardizes the health of all of us in the global village.

Almost 12 years have passed since Chernobyl, and the continued health reports indicate alarmingly high rates of cancers, birth defects, and immune system-related illnesses. These are the telling results of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe in the regions most affected.

Scientists and engineers generally believe that another Chernobyl incident is likely as long as poorly maintained hazardous reactors operate. Currently, the six first-generation RBMK reactors, constructed before the introduction of operating standards and located in

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Chernobyl, Kursk and St. Petersburg, suffer from serious breaches of safety and pose the most serious safety threat. A total of 15 Chernobyl-style power plants still function because the countries in transition lack the funds needed to replace them with safer energy sources.

Resources for these countries are required in order to safeguard not only the health of citizens living near these power plants but also those who live under the potential path of a radioactive cloud — that is, everyone. The health of all in the global village remains endangered as long as even one RBMK plant runs. Once the Chernobyl-style nuclear power plants are replaced, the vulnerability worldwide of human health will be reduced.
