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## **COMMUNICATION OF 10 SEPTEMBER 1999 RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BELARUS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

The texts of a letter dated 10 September 1999 and of a memorandum submitted by the Government of the Republic of Belarus which the Director General has received from the Permanent Mission of Belarus are - as requested - reproduced for the attention of the General Conference.

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“I have the honour to forward herewith a Memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Belarus contained an official request of the Government to restore the voting rights of Belarus at the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the IAEA General Conference as well as other information which should be presented to the General Conference for consideration together with the above-mentioned request.

“I kindly ask you to issue this Memorandum and the attached information as an official document of the General Conference.”

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<p>For reasons of economy, this document has been printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of documents to meetings.</p>
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## **Memorandum from the Government of the Republic of Belarus**

In connection with Belarus's arrears of payment to the IAEA's budget, the Government of the Republic of Belarus wishes to communicate the following.

Belarus has been recognized by the United Nations as a country with a transition economy. The difficult process of reform which is to provide the necessary material base for Belarus's further development is made even harder by a multitude of economic problems: pressure from creditors, trade barriers, refusal by other countries and international funding organizations to provide external financing. In 1998-99, all this led to a significant reduction in the volume of exports from Belarus (by 29%) and a sharp drop (by 55%) in the country's receipts of freely convertible currency. Under these conditions the Central Bank reserves have been depleted to a point where they can meet import needs for only 0.5 months (data from International Monetary Fund report on Belarus).

This adverse situation is exacerbated by the financial losses which are incurred every year as a result of the natural and man-made disasters that have befallen Belarus in recent times. During the period 1997-99, Belarus has applied to the United Nations on several occasions for help in emergency situations caused by natural disasters (confirmation on its way from United Nations Mission in Belarus).

In 1997 the central and southern areas of Belarus were devastated by a storm: 5 people died and 45 were injured, and hundreds of people were rendered homeless. There was damage to 4415 transformer substations and 349 electricity transmission lines, 376 houses and 208 industrial buildings were destroyed, and a further 7015 houses and 1959 industrial buildings were damaged. According to estimates of experts from the Belarus Ministry of Emergency Situations, the total amount of the damage caused by the storm exceeded US \$150 million.

In 1999, spring floods inundated 49 districts, 370 settlements, 7230 houses and 1058 farms, damaging 2.9 km of power transmission lines, 82.3 km of roads, 2.65 km of dams and 13 bridges. 2224 people were evacuated from 929 houses. The total extent of the flooding was 26 000 ha, of which 18 000 ha were agricultural land. The total damage to the national economy is estimated at 3 465 400 million roubles.

In addition, Belarus is one of the countries which suffered the most contamination as a result of the Chernobyl accident. The humanitarian, ecological, social, economic and medical consequences for Belarus of this accident, which has been classified by the United Nations as a major technological disaster, are of a long-term nature, and dealing with them calls for broad and active international co-operation and co-ordination of efforts at the international and national levels (the text of a statement to the donor countries issued by the United Nations and a copy of resolution 52/172 adopted by the 52nd session of the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1997 are attached). The Government of Belarus devotes significant budgetary resources each year to minimizing the consequences of this accident.

Thus the frail economy of Belarus is heavily burdened by the expense of dealing with the consequences not only of the Chernobyl accident, but also of devastating natural disasters.

Another reason for Belarus's arrears of payment to the Agency's budget was the inequitable decision by the United Nations General Assembly at its 47th session in 1992 to increase Belarus's assessed contribution to the United Nations Regular Budget by a factor of one and a half, which was automatically reflected in the scale of its contributions to the specialized agencies, including the IAEA. Since then Belarus's rate of assessment for the United Nations budget has been reduced considerably (in 2000 it will be 0.057% as compared with 0.48% in 1992).

The difficult economic situation with which Belarus has been faced in recent years, exacerbated by the necessity of dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, as well as the departure in the case of Belarus from the principle that the scale of assessment should correspond to Member States' real ability to pay, have all contributed to the accumulation of these arrears with the IAEA.

Despite the problems outlined above, the Belarus Government, guided by a desire to create favourable conditions for enhanced co-operation with the Agency, is making every effort to pay off its arrears. In 1998 a contribution of US \$1 734 326 was made to the Agency's Regular Budget, and in addition a significant amount was also paid to the Agency's Technical Co-operation Fund that year.

At the same time it must be acknowledged that in 1999 the Belarus Government cannot raise more than \$2 005 000 for payment towards the Agency's budget so as to regain its voting rights at the General Conference. For this reason it has been decided to agree with the Agency a payment plan for the gradual reduction of Belarus's arrears. In the current year Belarus has fulfilled all its obligations under this agreed plan and paid \$1 073 000 towards the IAEA's Regular Budget. In addition, Belarus has in 1999 paid all its assessed programme costs under the Agency's technical co-operation programme for last year (\$41 626), as well as contributing an amount of \$59 130 to the Technical Co-operation Fund for 1999.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus requests the delegations of Member States at the 43rd regular session of the IAEA General Conference to take the above circumstances into account and give favourable consideration to the question of restoring Belarus's voting rights at the Agency's General Conference.