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TEXT OF COMMUNICATION OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2000 RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BELARUS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY CONCERNING RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS

The text of a letter dated 15 September 2000 and its attachment submitted by the Permanent Mission of Belarus is reproduced herewith for the attention of the General Conference.

“I am writing to inform you that the Government of Belarus has fulfilled its obligations for 2000 under the payment plan signed between my Government and the Agency in 1999 and submit herewith the necessary documents containing Belarus’ request for restoration of its voting right in the IAEA.

”In view of the fact that Belarus has adhered to its payment plan for the past two years, Belarus would request the General Conference to consider restoring its right to vote for the next three years, which constitute the remainder of its payment plan.”

Memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Belarus

In connection with Belarus' debt to the IAEA budget, the Government of Belarus has the honour to inform you of the following.

The main reason for the accumulation of the considerable debt to the IAEA's budget was the adoption in 1992 at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of an unjust decision to increase Belarus' rate of contribution to the United Nations regular budget one and a half times, which was automatically reflected in the size of the country's contribution to the budgets of the specialized agencies, including the IAEA. Afterwards, Belarus' rate of contribution to the United Nations budget was considerably reduced (in 2000 it was 0.08% as compared with 0.48% in 1992).

The reduction in the contribution rate was facilitated by the fact that the Republic of Belarus was designated by the United Nations as a transition economy State. The reforms being undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Belarus with a view to establishing the necessary financial basis for steady growth in the country were beset by numerous economic problems: pressure from creditors, trade barriers and a sharp reduction in funding from abroad. All this has led in recent years to a considerable drop in exports from Belarus (by 29%) and a huge reduction (of 55%) in the influx into the country of fully convertible currency. Under these conditions, the reserves of the Central Bank are sufficient only to meet the need to import basic products for half a month (data taken from an International Monetary Fund report about Belarus). This then is the status of economic development in the country.

Problems in the economy have been most clearly in evidence with respect to overcoming the consequences and compensating for the damage sustained by the country's domestic economy as a result of man-made catastrophes and environmental emergencies. As the State which suffered the most radiation contamination from the Chernobyl catastrophe, Belarus has been allocating considerable budgetary resources each year to minimize the humanitarian, ecological, social, economic and medical consequences of the accident. The aforementioned consequences are long-term and cannot be overcome without large-scale, active international co-operation and co-ordinated international and national efforts.

The situation which has arisen is being aggravated by the financial losses caused by the natural disasters which occurred in Belarus in 1997-2000. The total amount of damage to the domestic economy is estimated at 4 billion¹ Belarus roubles. Thus, the cost of overcoming the consequences of not only the Chernobyl catastrophe but also the devastating natural disasters has placed a heavy burden on the economy, which is currently undergoing basic restructuring.

¹ Billion = 10⁹.

As far as Belarus is concerned, failure to comply with the principle of correspondence between the size of a State's contribution and its real ability to pay, and also failure to make allowance for the difficult economic situation in which Belarus has found itself in recent years, which has been aggravated by the need to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, have led to the build-up of a considerable debt to the IAEA.

In spite of this, the Government of the Republic of Belarus, guided by the desire to create favourable preconditions for increasing co-operation with the Agency, is making every effort to clear its debt. In 1999, the Republic of Belarus was the only Member State to sign with the Agency a plan for the step-by-step liquidation of its debt to the IAEA. In the current year, the Republic of Belarus has met its obligations in full under the agreed plan and has paid US \$627 000 to the Agency's Regular Budget. In addition, in 2000, the Government has transferred US \$45 407 to the Technical Co-operation Fund and intends to pay a further US \$50 000 by the end of the year. Thus, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus are taking all possible steps to pay off the debt, which has built up through circumstances beyond its control.

In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Belarus requests the delegations of Member States at the forty-fourth session of the IAEA General Conference to take the above into account and look favourably on the question of the restoration of Belarus' voting right at the Agency's General Conference.

52/172 **Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster**

Date: 16 December 1997

Meeting: 73

Adopted without a vote

Draft: A752/L.33/Rev.1 and Add.

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming, its resolutions 45/190 of 21 December 1990, 46/150 of 18 December 1991, 47/165 of 18 December 1992, 48/206 of 21 December 1993, and 50/134 of 20 December 1995, and taking note of the decisions adopted by the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system in the implementation of those resolutions,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/50 of 13 July 1990, 1991/51 of 26 July 1991 and 1992/38 of 30 July 1992 and Council decision 1993/232 of 22 July 1993,

Noting with appreciation the contribution made by States and by organizations of the United Nations system to the development of cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and the activities of regional and other organizations, in particular the Commission of the European Communities, as well as bilateral activities and those of non-governmental organizations,

Welcoming the commitments made by Member States in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, 154/ to intensify cooperation, inter alia, in the prevention and reduction of major technological and other disasters with an adverse impact on the environment, and in disaster relief and post-disaster rehabilitation in order to enhance the capabilities of affected countries to cope with such situations, as well as commitments made in response to the appeal of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident,

Conscious of the long-term nature of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was a major technological catastrophe in terms of its scope and created humanitarian, environmental, social, economic and health consequences and problems of common concern, requiring for their solution wide and active international cooperation and coordination of efforts in this field at the international and national levels,

Expressing profound concern about the ongoing effects on the lives and health of people, in particular children, in the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as in other countries affected by the Chernobyl disaster,

Taking into consideration the findings and outcome of the United Nations needs-assessment mission to the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in May 1997, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the United Nations-sponsored international seminar on the theme "Chernobyl and beyond: humanitarian assistance to victims of technological disasters", held in Moscow in May 1997,

Noting the readiness of Ukraine in principle to close the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by 2000, bearing in mind the need for adequate support from relevant countries and international organizations for that purpose,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/134, 155/

1. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions and, through existing coordination mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, to continue to maintain close cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as with regional and other relevant organizations, with a view to encouraging the regular exchange of information, cooperation and coordination of multilateral and bilateral efforts in those areas, while implementing programmes and specific projects, inter alia, in the framework of relevant agreements and arrangements;

2. Invites States, in particular donor States, relevant multilateral financial institutions and other concerned parties of the international community, including non-governmental organizations, to continue to provide support to the ongoing efforts made by Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster;

3. Welcomes the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the seven major industrial States and the European Community, adopted at Denver, United States of America in June 1997, regarding assistance in securing the environmental safety of the sarcophagus covering the remains of the destroyed Chernobyl reactor and the allocation of US\$ 300 million for a shelter implementation plan;

4. Expresses its appreciation for the contributions made to the shelter implementation plan at the International Chernobyl Shelter Pledging Conference for Governments, held in New York on 20 November 1997, and urges further contributions to the plan;

5. Welcomes the preparation by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, of the inter-agency programme of international assistance to areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster;

6. Welcomes also the convening by the United Nations of a special international meeting on Chernobyl held on 25 November 1997, to generate further support to the populations of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster and urges them to continue to contribute towards the implementation of the projects specified in the above-mentioned inter-agency programme;

7. Takes note with satisfaction of the establishment in Ukraine of the International Chernobyl Centre, 156/ with the active participation of Belarus and the Russian Federation, as an important step towards enhancement of the capabilities of the international community to study, mitigate and minimize consequences of such accidents and invites all interested parties to take part in the activities of the Centre;

8. Urges the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl to continue efforts aimed at strengthening international cooperation to overcome the health, social, economic and ecological consequences of the Chernobyl disaster in the most affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, based on the inter-agency programme of international assistance to areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster;

9. Calls upon the Secretary-General to continue the regular exchange of information with the countries concerned, relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, with a view to enhancing world public awareness of the consequences of such disasters;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, under a separate sub-item, a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

154/ General Assembly resolution S-19/2 of 27 June 1997.

155/ A/52/537.

156/ Formerly known as the International Scientific and Technological Centre For Nuclear and Radiological Accidents.