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**TEXT OF COMMUNICATION OF 3 SEPTEMBER 2001
RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF KAZAKHSTAN
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
CONCERNING RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS**

The text of a letter dated 3 September 2001 submitted by the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan and addressed to the Director General is reproduced herewith for the attention of the General Conference.

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.

Vienna, 3 September 2001

Excellency,

I have the honour to forward herewith the Memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan containing the official request of the Government to restore the voting right of Kazakhstan at the 45th session of the IAEA General Conference, for consideration by the General Conference.

I kindly request you to issue this Memorandum as an official document of the General Conference.

Accept, Sir, etc.,

(signed) Permanent Representative

MEMORANDUM FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan started falling into arrears vis-à-vis the Agency a few years ago when, as a result of many factors, the country entered into serious financial difficulties.

In the second half of the 1990s the country's economy experienced a growing number of crises; these were caused by difficulties in the transition period, one of which being the former planned economy's strong dependence on foreign suppliers and foreign consumers of Kazakh products and raw materials. The decline in manufacture, the extremely low level of national income, the disappearance of former channels of funding, servicing of the large foreign debt, and inflationary processes greatly reduced budget revenue.

The economic situation in the country was adversely affected by the significant deterioration in the state of the world market in 1998 brought about by the financial crises in South-East Asia and Russia. The drop in world prices for raw materials, the backbone of Kazakhstan's exports, and the reduced competitiveness of Kazakh goods on foreign markets led to a decrease in industrial manufacture and the gross domestic product (GDP).

The difficult economic situation was exacerbated by ecological disasters and the legacy of the numerous military bases and facilities in operation on the territory of Kazakhstan in former Soviet times. The testing of weapons of mass destruction and thoughtless management of the environment have led to global ecological disasters in the region of the Aral Sea, the Semipalatinsk test site and missile test sites.

The international community has acknowledged that nuclear weapons testing at the Semipalatinsk site constitutes the most protracted abuse of the population and the environment in the twentieth century. Over a period of 40 years, approximately 500 explosions took place at the site, 116 of which were atmospheric, i.e. above or on the earth's surface. The total force of the explosions was equivalent to 17 400 000 tons of TNT. In all, 1.6 million people have been exposed to radiation and 1.2 million of these continue to live in areas bordering the test site. The weapons testing has done serious damage to the environment, resulting inter alia in the loss of farm land, and destruction of the landscape, ecosystems and the traditional way of life. Large tracts of land have been contaminated with caesium-137 and strontium-90. The unique nature of the crisis engendered by testing ground activities has been noted in two United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the subject, adopted at its 52nd and 55th sessions, and also in two special reports by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, submitted to the 53rd and 55th sessions.

In addition to Semipalatinsk, there were four other nuclear testing grounds on the territory of Kazakhstan where the scale of the problem is smaller only because the testing carried out there was less intensive.

The ecological crisis affecting the Aral Sea occupies a special place among global disasters, and is the result of major human interference in our planet's natural environment.

The drying up of the Sea has led to destruction of its ecosystem and that of the deltas of the rivers flowing into it, to major losses of land and water resources and, as a consequence, to the economic decline of the Aral Sea region.

As a result, there is an extremely unfavourable ecological, health and epidemiological situation in the Aral Sea region and southern Kazakhstan. The sudden deterioration in the local population's standards of living, nutrition and work has resulted in morbidity and mortality rates rising to the highest levels ever recorded in the CIS with 70-80% of inhabitants suffering from diverse illnesses. The unfavourable situation and the lack of job opportunities have, in recent years, led to an exodus of the population from the aforementioned areas. The concept of "ecological refugees" has emerged, and many communities and entire regions have been abandoned by large numbers of inhabitants.

Problems such as the acute water shortage and poor water quality, contamination of the land with industrial wastes, soil degradation and desertification, and a reduction in biodiversity are aggravating the social problems of the population in many parts of the country and creating barriers to economic development. The total area that has suffered erosion and desertification is now almost 180 million hectares.

In the past two years, the national agricultural industry has been dealt a serious blow by a sudden and unprecedented plague of locusts causing major crop losses. Considerable resources have been channelled into dealing with its consequences and preventing it from recurring.

Despite the significant material and technical assistance provided by donor countries and international organizations, the main burden of expenditure to eliminate the effects of the ecological problems has been borne by the national budget. The Government is taking all possible steps to give the population the assistance it needs. Tens of millions of US dollars are being spent on social rehabilitation programmes in affected areas and on eliminating the consequences of the ecological crises. The Government's assets also include substantial loans from the World Bank and other international financial institutions for the implementation of these programmes. As a result, the Government has had to reduce other expenditure, such as the discharge of its debt obligations and payments to international organizations, including the IAEA.

Another problem which Kazakhstan has had to deal with and which should be noted, was the establishment of an unjust scale of contribution to the United Nations budget that did not correspond with its actual ability to pay. Following the application of a more objective method of calculation, Kazakhstan's scale of contribution has been reduced from 0.35% in 1992-1994 to 0.029-0.028% in 2001-2003, i.e. more than tenfold.

This, together with some improvement in the country's economic situation over the past two years, has enabled the Government to develop and start implementing a programme for settling its arrears vis-à-vis international organizations. This year, the Government concluded an agreement with the IAEA on a five-year plan to clear its arrears, and has paid US \$370 000 to the Agency's budget. Thus, Kazakhstan has made the first payment in accordance with the aforementioned plan, comprising one fifth of its total arrears at the time the agreement was signed and its contribution for 2001.

The Government is committed to fulfilling its obligations under this payment plan so as to clear all of its arrears.

In view of the above, the Government of Kazakhstan requests the Member States of the IAEA to look positively on the question of restoring the Republic of Kazakhstan's right to vote at the IAEA's General Conference.