

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE AT THE 949th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

25 April 2013

Regarding the anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster

Mr. Chairperson,

Tomorrow, 26 April, once again marks the anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, one of the largest man-made disasters in the history of humanity. Millions of people have suffered as a result of that tragedy, and the territory of two dozen European countries, principally Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, has been contaminated with radioactive caesium and strontium.

As you are aware, the Republic of Belarus has borne the brunt of this disaster, and almost a quarter of its territory has been contaminated by radiation. The economic and environmental damage caused to our country is put by experts at 235 billion United States dollars (to put this figure into perspective, this is equivalent to 32 annual budgets for Belarus in 1986). The human dimension of the disaster involves 2 million people, more than half of whom still live on contaminated land.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Chernobyl tragedy has been a disaster and most serious challenge for Belarus and the country has been faced with difficult tasks in virtually all spheres of life.

The disaster made necessary the large-scale evacuation and resettlement of the local inhabitants. Social welfare and medical care and rehabilitation and treatment of the population for exposure to radiation were urgently required and there was a critical rise in oncological diseases. It has been necessary to develop and implement protective measures and introduce an effective system of radiation control and monitoring.

In that connection, dealing comprehensively and in the long term with the aftermath of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant has been a priority goal of the State policy of Belarus. The fifth State programme to deal with the consequences of the disaster for the period 2011 to 2015 and up to 2020 is currently being implemented with an overall budget of some 2.3 billion United States dollars. Its main objective is to ensure the transition

from rehabilitation measures to socio-economic revival and sustainable development of the affected regions.

International co-operation certainly plays an important role in dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and in post-Chernobyl development. Belarus is working closely with Ukraine and Russia in this regard. We value highly the assistance from international organizations, in particular within the framework of projects under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme and the International Atomic Energy Agency. We are sincerely grateful to all the partners, charitable and non-governmental organizations and private individuals, who during all these years have provided and continue to provide invaluable humanitarian assistance to Belarus and its citizens, *inter alia* through organizing health care for Belarusian children.

Mr. Chairperson,

Twenty-seven years have passed since the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Thanks to the targeted and systematic efforts of the countries most affected, it has been possible, with the support of the international community, to achieve considerable results in dealing with the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. At the same time, there is still much to be done. Only through joint efforts in solidarity with others will it be possible to cope with the Chernobyl legacy.

We trust that the OSCE and its participating States will not remain on the sidelines of this process and will make a substantial contribution to the efforts to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, as stipulated in the OSCE Ministerial Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, adopted in Ljubljana in 2005.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.