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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALYAKSANDR SYCHOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 April 2010

In connection with the 24th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster

Mr. Chairperson,

On 26 April we commemorated the 24th anniversary of that tragic day when the accident occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power station. The worst man-made disaster in the history of humanity affected to one degree or another many OSCE participating States. Belarus, Ukraine and Russia have suffered most.

Specifically, as a result of that accident nearly one-fourth of the territory of Belarus was exposed to radioactive contamination. The Chernobyl tragedy had a colossal effect on the lives and health of the people, the economy, the science and the culture of our country.

The economic damage from the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster for Belarus, calculated for the 30-year period needed to overcome them, has been put at 235 billion dollars. For the economy of the country this figure is equivalent to 32 times the national budget for 1985.

The human losses as a result of the accident include two million men, women and children who were adversely affected. More than 1,300,000 persons continue to live in contaminated areas.

It has been possible at the cost of enormous efforts and thanks to the international assistance received to solve the most acute and pressing problems. However, we continue to be confronted with the difficult task of restoring the economic potential of the affected regions, creating conditions to allow people to live there free of danger, producing ecologically pure food, and safeguarding health.

It is not by chance that the General Assembly of the United Nations, acting at the initiative of Belarus, has declared the ten-year period beginning with the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster to be the Decade for the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions. The United Nations commitment to the Decade and the Action Plan

for Chernobyl was reaffirmed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his address on the occasion of the current anniversary of the disaster.

International assistance continues to be an extremely important factor in the efforts to deal effectively with the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to restore normal life in the contaminated regions.

The Chernobyl tragedy imparted an impulse for a unique experience in international co-operation, the participants in which are not merely governments and international organizations but also doctors, scientists and ordinary men and women – everyone who shares the desire to help those who have suffered as a result of this catastrophe.

We are convinced that the OSCE can also contribute to this international co-operation to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, as noted in the declaration of the Ljubljana Ministerial Council meeting on the 20th anniversary of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

We trust that the convening in April 2011 of a large-scale international conference timed to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the accident will lend additional momentum to this process.

In conclusion I should like to thank all our international partners for the support they have shown Belarus in helping it to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

It is our hope that through our joint efforts it will be possible to reduce to a minimum the effect of the accident's negative consequences on the life and health of the population of the worst affected regions, to ensure the ecological safety of the planet and to avert the possibility of a repetition of similar disasters in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.