

**DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES**  
**on the CORE Programme**  
**“Co-operation for Rehabilitation of living conditions in Chernobyl**  
**affected areas in Belarus”**

The undersigned, including national and regional authorities, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), potential donors and others providing expertise (referred to hereunder as “Participants”) agree to the following Declaration:

**In appreciation of**

- the efforts undertaken by the Republic of Belarus and the world community to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) accident of 26 April 1986;
- the fact that the consequences of the Chernobyl accident for people have not gone away, at the same time as the level of national and international support to the contaminated areas has declined;
- the fact that the impact of Chernobyl on the contaminated areas is not only a local and national problem but a global concern for the world community;
- the urgent need of handling the long-term consequences of radioactive contamination for the mankind and its environment;
- several international assessments of the continuing impact of the Chernobyl disaster<sup>1</sup>;
- the conviction that there is a need for a new sustainable rehabilitation and development-based approach. This should integrate health, economic and social development, environment, food, education and culture to address the actual and long-term needs of the affected populations and the civil society. Complementary to the above, donors should co-ordinate their activity so that their support efficiently reaches the people and communities most affected, and achieves the expected results.

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<sup>1</sup> *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report on "The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: a Strategy for Recovery" (25 January 2002): see [www.un.minsk.by](http://www.un.minsk.by); the World Bank report "Belarus: Chernobyl Review" (15 July 2002): see [www.worldbank.org/by](http://www.worldbank.org/by); the reports of the Heads of Mission/Delegation of the European Union about their visits (April 2001 and May 2003) to the contaminated areas of Belarus sent to the Presidency and the Commission; Rehabilitation of the living conditions in territories contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear accident - contribution of the ETHOS approach. Proceedings of the international seminar held in the city of Stolin, Brest oblast, Belarus (15-16 November 2001): see [www.cepn.asso.fr/fr/ethos/seminaire/.html](http://www.cepn.asso.fr/fr/ethos/seminaire/.html)*

**Declare that:**

- the CORE Programme is an adequate starting point for addressing the above, with a focus on the needs of people, and to improve their lives and living conditions through a framework which enables national and international support to the communities involved;
- the experience and results obtained during the implementation of the CORE Programme should become public knowledge;
- the CORE Programme is open to other participants. The undersigned appeal to international community for wider involvement in and support for the Programme.

**SECTION I****THE PROGRAMME'S OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the CORE Programme is to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of selected districts by reaching out to the people themselves, helping them to contribute to formulating specific individual and common project proposals. While such participatory approaches, based on the involvement of the civil society in project activity, have been successfully used in other parts of the world, it is an innovative approach for those affected by the Chernobyl accident in Belarus to be considered as partners. This is to be achieved through the development and implementation of integrated projects in priority areas, involving local participation, as well as national and international partners, at the governmental and non-governmental level.

**SECTION II****LOCATION AND TERM OF THE PROGRAMME**

At first, the CORE Programme is implemented in the following four affected districts of Belarus: Bragin, Chechersk, Slavgorod and Stolin. Whenever possible, other contaminated districts will also be involved.

The CORE Programme is designed for an initial five-year period, effective after the adherence to the present Declaration by the participants. Thereafter, an independent international evaluation of the Programme will assess its results and consider further action.

**SECTION III****PRIORITY AREAS**

The CORE Programme integrates and co-ordinates the different dimensions of the rehabilitation of living conditions in the contaminated areas through a comprehensive set of activities focused on the following priority areas:

- *Health care and surveillance*: this part of the Programme aims to improve the health of the population through better primary health care services, health education and dynamic monitoring of the health of pregnant women and children in the radiological context. Efforts undertaken in this direction should contribute to increase the quality and the efficacy of care for affected people in the concerned areas.
- *Economic and social development in the rural contaminated areas*: this part of the Programme aims to increase incomes through sustainable economic development based on the local populations' initiatives, particularly private producers and some already existing economic actors in the area in a context of an economy in transition; and involves the provision of technical, agricultural, radiological, marketing and financial support (e.g. micro credits and grants).
- *Culture and education of children and youth, transmission of the memory of the Chernobyl disaster*: this part of the Programme aims to develop a practical radiological culture among children and youth, raising awareness and memory of the Chernobyl disaster and its consequences for the contaminated areas and for mankind.
- *Radiological quality*: this part of the Programme aims to develop an operational and pluralistic radiological measurement system in the four districts. This system will allow the assessment and the follow-up by the people themselves and by local professionals of the "radiological quality" of their environment and their food. The existence of such an operational measurement system is a prerequisite for the implementation of the three other priorities areas.

New priority areas can be proposed by any of the participants for consideration by the Approval Board (see SECTION V), and if agreed, they will be added through a special appendix to the present Declaration.

## SECTION IV

### BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAMME

The CORE Programme is implemented according to the following principles:

1. *Integrated approach*. Sustainable rehabilitation of living conditions in the contaminated territories should be integrating all the dimensions of life quality and the participation of the local people in the design and implementation of activities. The Programme therefore implies an integrating approach, involving a set of projects in the fields of social and economic development, public health, education and culture.
2. *Voluntary participation and openness*. The participants join the Programme voluntarily by signing this Declaration. New participants in the Programme will be agreed on by the Approval Board (see SECTION V). Agreement of new participants to the Declaration will be mentioned in a special appendix. Each participant has the right to present new projects according to the priority areas. Each participant has the right to leave the Programme at any time.

3. *Practical applicability.* The main objective of the Programme is to coordinate projects and to support their implementation in order to improve the living conditions of the population of the contaminated territories.
4. *Non-profit approach.* The Programme is based on non-profit-making activities. The main portion of the funding will be allocated for strengthening the capacity of local actors to deal with the issues identified in the priority areas. This includes supporting technical and methodological partnerships of national and international institutions and NGOs.
5. *Collective decision-making.* None of the participants can play a dominant role based on territorial, financial, political, religious or other characteristics. Everyone has the right to propose a Programme-related issue for a fair and equitable discussion by the participants.
6. *Complementarity.* The Programme is complementary to the past and ongoing projects for improvement of living conditions in the contaminated areas, and by no means contradicts them.
7. *Flexibility.* The Programme activities are open to change, amendment, and expansion of their scope. The participants are ready to adjust themselves to changing conditions and to make fast collective decisions in the interests of the successful implementation of the Programme.

## SECTION V

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND CO-ORDINATION**

The CORE assessment, decision and coordination procedure is intended to provide the fundamental quality insurance needed for building and implementing integrated projects.

The objective is to ensure quality preparation of projects within the Programme Priority Areas; then to select the projects, and then to provide effective coordination and technical support for their implementation.

The CORE organisational structures and procedures for assessment, approval and coordination will be officially initiated within the three months following the signature of the Declaration.

The CORE organisational structures and procedures outlined in this section are without prejudice to specific rules applicable to relevant international aid programmes.

### **PREPARATION, ASSESSMENT, APPROVAL OF PROJECTS**

Projects will be prepared, assessed and selected through a procedure involving a Co-ordination Team (CT), a Preparation and Assessment Committee (PAC) and an Approval Board (AB).

### **The Co-ordination Team (CT)**

The CT, involving a Belarusian CORE coordinator, is supported by a representative team of national and international experts. It will:

- look for and provide support to potential local, national and international partners that could develop integrated "Topical Projects" in coordination with all participants;
- assist in identifying whether support is needed to help further develop the project, whether on technical questions, and/or in terms of facilitating the participatory process of project development;
- inform any new potential participants about the programme and deliver suitable information at a national, European, and international level.

Other functions of the CT (co-ordination) are outlined below.

### **The Preparation and Assessment Committee (PAC)**

A formulation or preparation phase of projects will involve input from members of the PAC gathering the concerned actors (local, national and international participants of the CORE Programme) together with the Belarusian and international expertise. Once a draft project is defined, the PAC will:

- check if the proposed project fits within the priorities areas of the CORE Programme;
- check if the proposed project addresses actual local needs and concerns, and if there is a multi-stakeholder (local, national and international) approach;
- check if the necessary technical and process expertise is involved in the proposed project (according to its nature) in order to validate its viability and sustainability;
- check if the resources involved within the project will actually reach the target population and communities.

All this work will be conducted with the participant presenting the project on the basis of equal standing.

In case of positive assessment the project is proposed to the Approval Board (AB).

### **The Approval Board (AB)**

The final decision on a project is taken by the AB, on the principle of consensus. The initial composition of the Approval Board is listed in annex I. It can be amended by the AB, in particular, when new participants wish to join the CORE Programme. As soon as approved, a project is recognized as a part of the CORE Programme and will be suitable to integrate with the coordination structures of CORE.

Activities/projects selected and funded through a different programme (see SECTION VII) can, at any time, be submitted by sponsors to the CORE structures for assessment (PAC), approval (AB), coordination and integration (CT).

## **COORDINATION AND SUPPORT OF PROJECTS**

The Co-ordination Team (CT) will:

- follow-up and co-ordinate the implementation of the CORE projects. Each project will involve a consortium of participants managed by a Project Co-ordinator (PC). This co-ordinator will be accountable for the implementation of the project, and reporting to the CT. If the project is implemented within the UNDP Support Project (see below SECTION VI), the PC will also act as principal contractor;
- ensure geographical and cross-sectoral integration of the CORE projects;
- facilitate the PAC and the AD procedures (see SECTION V).

The financing and administrative support to the CORE co-ordination structures will be provided by the UNDP Programme Support Project (see SECTION VI).

## **SECTION VI**

### **THE UNDP PROGRAMME SUPPORT PROJECT**

Without prejudice to specific procedures applicable to relevant international aid programmes, such as the EU Cooperation Programmes, the UNDP Support Project will:

1. Provide financial, administrative and technical support to the CORE co-ordination structures for:
  - facilitating the preparation, assessment and selection of the projects (involving the PAC and AB);
  - co-ordinating the implementation of the integrated CORE Programme.
2. If so requested on a voluntary basis, administer donor resources for the Programme.
3. Support implementation of the Programme by bringing transparent, accountable and flexible procedures in the following fields: contract preparation with the operators of the projects; and follow-up of the implementation of the projects: schedules, financial management and results.
4. Help to create conditions for involvement of other affected areas of Belarus into the Programme, and linkages with similar work in other Chernobyl affected areas in Ukraine and Russian Federation.
5. Provide regular reporting as well as public information about the CORE Programme to Belarusians, Europeans and the international community.

The above is reflected in a UNDP project document, on which participants in the Programme will be consulted, and which is signed between the Government of Belarus and UNDP. If Programme participants chose, they can utilize the structure of the Support Project to delegate in a flexible, transparent and accountable way the day-to-day administrative and financial management of the project(s) to which they contribute.

Co-financers of the projects within the programme have the option of channelling their funds through the UNDP Support Project, or funding their Projects directly and using their own financial and administrative procedures.

## SECTION VII

### **PROJECT FINANCING AND THE AUTONOMY OF CONTRIBUTING INSTITUTIONS**

Each participant will consider the possibility of a contribution to the implementation of the CORE Programme. Each participant will determine and announce the level of its possible contribution to the Programme in due course. It will remain free to select (according to its priorities) the projects it wants to fund or to co-fund and/or to determine the sharing of its contribution.

The mechanisms of possible financing are determined by the participants, depending on their preferences and/or restrictions. The financial resources are channelled:

- directly to the organizations and the persons involved in implementation of the CORE Programme and/or projects; or
- through the UNDP Programme Support Project.

Any relevant information on project implementation and outcomes (except for confidential contract-related information) should be accessible to the participants.

The provisions included in this section are without prejudice to specific procedures applicable to relevant international aid programmes, such as the EU Cooperation Programmes. Each participant is, in particular, free to follow its own selection procedure for funding or co-funding activities.

## SECTION VIII

### **OBLIGATIONS OF THE BELARUSIAN AUTHORITIES**

The Belarusian authorities, represented by the Committee on the Problems of the Consequences of the Catastrophe at the Chernobyl NPP under Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus and the District Executive Committees, engage themselves to:

- assist foreign participants with free visa, customs and other procedures concerning their activity in Belarus within the framework of the Belarusian legislation;
- initiate, if necessary, the drafting and adoption of relevant legal acts of Belarus to facilitate favourable conditions for the Programme implementation (including tax exemption for cargoes and financial resources received from outside Belarus within the framework of the Programme);
- provide in-kind and financial contributions and other assistance as needed to support implementation of the Programme.

## SECTION IX

### EXPERT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The participants commit themselves to an international independent review after the end of the five-year term of the CORE Programme, as well as a mid-term assessment after two and a half years. The review shall be based on the success criteria specified in SECTION X. The outcome shall be made public.

## SECTION X

### SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAMME

The participants identify the following criteria to measure the success of the CORE Programme. Such criteria, as appropriate, will be integrated into the design of individual projects to help measure their success as well as that of the Programme:

- Increased living standards of the concerned populations measured in terms of progress in income, health, food quality, economic and social development, environment, education and culture;
- Entrepreneurship and social initiative developed in the concerned communities;
- A practical radiological culture developed to enable the concerned local population to better assess the radiological situation and to improve radiological quality, with respect to health, food, agriculture, and the environment;
- Access by the general public to effective, reliable, and pluralistic measures of radiological assessment;
- The level of involvement of local people, local communities and more generally Belarusian civil society in the Programme;
- An increased number and variety of projects in place meeting the objectives of the Programme in all priority areas, and reaching more people;
- An increase in the number of new participants in the Programme, whether governmental and non-governmental, and from all levels: local, national and international;
- An increase in international and national contributions to the Programme;
- An independent international review takes place within 5 years of the start of implementation assessing the need to continue the Programme and to modify or expand the priority areas;
- The CORE approach is disseminated to other contaminated districts of Belarus as well as to Ukraine and Russian Federation;
- Reliable, consistent and wide information about the Programme is made available at the local, national, European and international levels;
- The results achieved by the Programme are sustainable.

These criteria can be further refined as needed by the PAC and AB, with changes recorded in an appendix to the Declaration.

***Done at Minsk this 15<sup>th</sup> day of October 2003:***

Mr. Vladimir G. Tsalko	Chairman of the Committee on the Problems of the Consequences of the Catastrophe at the Chernobyl NPP under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus
Mr. Kevin McGrath	Acting UN Resident Co-ordinator/UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus
Mr. John Daniel	Deputy Director General of the UNESCO
Amb. Eberhard Heyken	Ambassador, Head of the OSCE Office in Minsk
Amb. Nurbert Jousten	Ambassador, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova
Amb. Guglielmo Ardizzone	Ambassador of Italy, also in his capacity as acting Presidency of the European Union
Amb. Stéphane Chmielewsky	Ambassador of France
Amb. Helmut Frick	Ambassador of Germany
Amb. Brian Bennett	Ambassador of the United Kingdom
	EU Acceding Countries
Mr. Matthias Weingart	Country Director, Swiss Development & Co-operation Agency
Mr. Gilles Hériard Dubreuil	Chairman of the CORE Partnership Committee <sup>1</sup>
Mr. Joseph McGrath	Executive Director, Students IOK for Chernobyl, Ireland
Mr. Richard A. Stefanovich	Chairman of the Bragin District Executive Committee
Mr. Valery V. Bcrestov	Chairman of the Slavgorod District Executive Committee
Mr. Alexey A. Demko	Acting Chairman of the Stolin District Executive Committee
Mr. Vassily M. Maksimenko	Chairman of the Chechersk District Executive Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Collective of European NGOs and institutions constituted during the preparatory phase of the CORE programme and including the «A Tous Vents du Monde» association. Nuclear Protection Evaluation Centre (CEPN). Fertilisation pour l'Epanouissement et le Renouveau de la Terre (FERT), National Paris-Grignon Agronomic Institute (INAP-G), French Radioprotection and Nuclear Safety Institute (IRSN), Médecins du Monde, French Ministry of Agriculture, Muladis Consultants, Patrimoine Sans Frontière, Caen University

### **ANNEXE I: Composition of the Approval Board**

Vladimir G. Tsalko, Chairman of the Committee on the Problems of the Consequences of the Catastrophe at the Chernobyl NPP under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus;

Kevin McGrath, Acting UN Resident Co-ordinator/UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus;

John Daniel, Deputy Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

Eberhard Heyken, Ambassador, Head of the OSCE Office in Minsk;

Nurbert Jousten, Ambassador, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova;

Guglielmo Ardizzone, Ambassador of Italy in Belarus;

Stéphane Chmelewsky, Ambassador of France in Belarus;

Helmut Frick, Ambassador of Germany in Belarus;

Brian Bennett, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Belarus;

Matthias Weingart, Country Director, Development and Cooperation Agency of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation;

Gilles Hériard Dubreuil, Chairman of the CORE Partnership Committee<sup>1</sup>;

Joseph McGrath, Executive Director, Students IOK for Chernobyl, Ireland;

Richard A. Stefanovich, Chairman of the Bragin District Executive Committee;

Valery V. Brestov, Chairman of the Slavgorod District Executive Committee;

Alexey A. Demko, Acting Chairman of the Stolin District Executive Committee;

Vassily M. Maksimenko, Chairman of the Chechersk District Executive Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Collective of European NGOs and institutions constituted during the preparatory phase of the CORE programme and including the «A Tous Vents du Monde» association. Nuclear Protection Evaluation Centre (CEPN). Fertilisation pour l'Epanouissement et le Renouveau de la Terre (FERT), National Paris-Grignon Agronomic Institute (INAP-G), French Radioprotection and Nuclear Safety Institute (IRSN), Médecins du Monde, French Ministry of Agriculture, Muladis Consultants, Patrimoine Sans Frontière, Caen University