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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Twenty eight years after the Chernobyl disaster:
stepping up international cooperation
to ensure sustainable development of the affected regions

On April 26, 2014 the international community commemorates the twenty-eighth anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, one of the worst nuclear disasters in the history of mankind. This tragic event led to the loss of human lives, contamination of considerable territories, significant number of displaced persons and loss of livelihood.

The Chernobyl disaster became an important lesson for the humanity, which gave an impetus to the strengthening of nuclear safety worldwide. International nuclear and radiation safety standards and rules as well as national nuclear energy development and radioactive waste management strategies were revised in order to live up to the challenges of this lesson.

The Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the countries most affected by the disaster, have been undertaking significant efforts to deal with the aftermath of Chernobyl. For nearly three decades, these countries have been implementing a careful approach to provide radiation protection for the population while using the contaminated areas in a safe manner, creating conditions for sustainable economic and social development of the local communities.

Despite the considerable progress in rehabilitation of the affected areas, much remains to be done. The legacy of the Chernobyl disaster will definitely linger for a long while.

The Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine appreciate the contribution of the international community, including through the United Nations system, to the rehabilitation and development of the affected regions.

The Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (2006-2016) proclaimed by the UN General Assembly and the UN Action Plan on Chernobyl demonstrate solidarity of the international community with the countries most affected by the Chernobyl disaster and its readiness to support their national efforts and promote social and economic development of the affected areas, safety of people living in affected areas, as well as ensure economic self-sufficiency of the population. A special role in this regard belongs to the UN Development Programme that acts as an able coordinator of the UN system agencies involved in this important work.

On December 13, 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution 68/99 "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimise the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster". This important document aims at consolidating international efforts to address the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. It encourages cooperation between Member States, UN system agencies and other organisations with a view to achieving sustainable recovery of the affected regions and population in the interest of the entire international community.

Recognising the significance of the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the disaster, the UN General Assembly resolution paves the way for the timely elaboration of effective approaches to the Chernobyl international cooperation after the conclusion of the UN Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions in 2016. The time has come to consider the shape of a new conceptual framework for multilateral international cooperation on Chernobyl. The UN General Assembly resolution 68/99 is a solid starting point for this work.

The next meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl in May 2014 in Belarus, the first to be held out of New York, is going to mark the beginning of an important substantive discussion of this conceptual framework.

New York, April 26, 2014