

had been carried out, particularly in the field of human health, where the consequences of the disaster was certainly more serious than the international experts thought.

The Ukrainian SSR would give its full support to the intensification of international action to mitigate the effects of the disaster and would collaborate as actively as possible in the Joint Plan established by the Coordinator for international cooperation and a number of Governments, including that of the Ukrainian SSR.

Mr. KAARIA (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland, said that five years after the Chernobyl disaster, its consequences could still not be fully assessed and continued to affect seriously the inhabitants of the affected areas, not only at the economic, social and medical levels but also in psychological and sociological terms.

The Nordic countries wished to stress the importance of countries using nuclear energy minimizing the risks involved and endeavouring to achieve the highest standards of safety at the installations. The risks involved in the use of nuclear energy made it essential that research and development of new sources of energy should be a high priority, both nationally and internationally.

The Nordic countries had actively supported the activities undertaken by the international community in the wake of the Chernobyl accident and noted with appreciation that interagency and interdisciplinary cooperation within the United Nations system had rarely been so effective. Efforts should also focus on the follow-up and monitoring of the scientific consequences of the accident. The Nordic countries urged the relevant United Nations organizations to tackle disaster preparedness and to study the precautions to be taken in nuclear and other industrial installations. The Nordic countries were cooperating bilaterally with the USSR in the nuclear security field; that should be seen as a complement to the action undertaken at the multilateral level.

In his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution A/45/190 (E/1991/76), the Secretary-General indicated that a special interagency task force had visited the Chernobyl area and that a master plan of aid requirements, mainly in the humanitarian field, had

subsequently been prepared. The Nordic countries would have liked that document to have been available to members of the Council before the opening of the current session.

Mr. GONZALEZ (International Atomic Energy Agency) reported to the Council on the recently completed International Chernobyl Project, which IAEA had organized early in 1990, in response to a request by the Government of the USSR, for the purpose of evaluating radiological consequences of the Chernobyl accident for human health and the environment and determining the requirements for safe living in the contaminated areas. Again at the request of the Soviet Government, a project planning meeting, in which representatives of the USSR and of the Governments of the Ukrainian SSR and the Byelorussian SSR had participated, had been held in Moscow, and subsequently a 10-member international team of experts had carried out a preparatory mission in the three affected Republics, in order to review information provided by various Soviet organizations, to introduce the project to the local population and to learn about people's concerns. On that basis, the team had defined the project's goals and drafted a tentative work plan.

A 19-member International Advisory Committee, chaired by the Director of the Radiation Effects Research Foundation at Hiroshima, Japan, was subsequently set up to monitor the project and prepare the final report. During the implementation of the project, which began in May 1990, about 200 independent experts carried out some 50 technical missions in the USSR. He stressed that the experts had worked not in two or three settlements, as indicated by the Ukrainian representative, but in 28 settlements affected by the accident and had used seven additional settlements as controls. The project involved five major tasks: the historic portrayal of events; corroboration of the environmental contamination assessments; corroboration of the individual and collective dose assessments; evaluation of the clinical health effects from radiation exposure and of the general health situation; and protective measures.

In March 1991, the International Advisory Committee approved the conclusions and recommendation of the Project which might be summarized in the following way: (a) the surface contamination levels reported in the public literature were generally corroborated; (b) the radiation doses already incurred and anticipated in the future were lower than originally estimated; (c) while non-radiation-related health disorders and negative psychological

consequences had indeed been observed in the settlements surveyed, there was no evidence at that stage of health disorders directly attributable to radiation exposure; (d) although the general response of the authorities had been to a great extent reasonable and consistent with international guidelines at the time of the accident, some of the measures taken or planned for the longer term appeared more extensive than necessary on purely radiological grounds. It was recognized, however, that social and political factors had to be taken into account.

In May 1991, an International Conference on the International Chernobyl Project was held in Vienna to examine its conclusions and the following month, the Board of Governors of IAEA agreed that the conclusions should be submitted to the forthcoming IAEA General Conference.

It should be noted that the information collected by the Project refuted some exaggerated reports about radiation effects in the affected areas. The information was coherent with the results of a previous evaluation by UNSCEAR as well as of two other, more limited, studies by WHO and the League of Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies. It was also consistent with predictions based on the results of studies of the long-term effects of the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However there had been criticism of the fact that persons who had taken part in decontamination work and people who had been evacuated from the prohibited zone had not been the subject of any international study. Although there was no doubt that an inquiry into the exposure to which those groups had been subjected would be of scientific interest, they were already outside contaminated areas and no immediate measures could be taken other than continuous monitoring of their state of health. Nevertheless, the IAEA Director General had indicated at the most recent meeting of the Board of Governors that if the Soviet side requested the Agency to try to establish, in cooperation with WHO, the potential health consequences of such exposures, an inquiry of that type could be undertaken to supplement the one that had just finished.

Other international activities were also under way to deal with the many consequences of the Chernobyl accident. The Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents was encouraging its United Nations system members to carry out research to that end. WHO was planning to organize a long-term international programme for the study of medical aspects of the accident, an initiative the IAEA was actively supporting. Finally, the Agency

expected to participate in coordinating the work carried out by the Chernobyl Centre for International Research, recently established by the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the USSR.

Mr. SOKOLVARI (Thailand) said that his delegation was concerned about the effects of the Chernobyl disaster on people's lives and health, in particular the state of health of children subjected to the effects of radiation.

Taking into account the need to continue taking comprehensive measures to study and minimize the consequences of the accident, especially measures to safeguard the health of the population, to improve the environment in the contaminated areas and to prevent further possible transboundary radioactive effects, his delegation urged that coordination of the ongoing international efforts to that end should be strengthened.

Mr. BAIER (Austria) said that the Chernobyl disaster clearly called for a response of solidarity on the part of the international community. Whatever the precise scientific assessment of the extent of the radiological consequences of the accident, it was clear that it had caused unprecedented human suffering.

His delegation was convinced that the able leadership of the Coordinator would continue to act as a catalyst and would call forth concrete manifestations of international concern for the affected populations. It welcomed the forthcoming convening of a meeting of countries wishing to contribute to the mitigation of the consequences of the accident and would recommend its Government to give very careful consideration to the Joint Plan submitted by the Governments of the USSR, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Russian SFSR.

The Austrian Government had decided to allocate a contribution of \$50 million to a children's hospital in Minsk and was also financing a variety of activities by non-governmental Austrian organizations in that region. Austria had been one of the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 45/190 on International Cooperation to Address and Mitigate the Consequences of the Accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. Considering that it was also crucial to do everything possible to prevent similar disasters from happening in the future, Austria had also co-sponsored a resolution adopted at the thirty-fourth General Conference of IAEA endorsing a multi-year programme of

international cooperation to assist and improve the safety of older nuclear power plants. It had furthermore supported the continuation of an IAEA programme started in the spring of 1990 to assess the radiological consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

Mr. KOIKE (Japan) said that over five years after the accident and in spite of international efforts to minimize the consequences of that unprecedented man-made disaster, the population in the affected areas continued to live in fear and anxiety and the social and environmental damage remained great. Having suffered the effects of the atomic bomb, Japan felt profound sympathy for all those whose lives had been gravely affected by the accident and continued to be very concerned by the possible long-term effects on human health and the environment. From a humanitarian point of view, Japan considered it essential that the international community should support both multilateral and bilateral initiatives to counter the consequences of the disaster.

His delegation wished to express its appreciation to IAEA for the report on the radiological consequences and the evaluation of the protective measures taken following the Chernobyl accident, which was based on extensive research carried out over a period of a year and a half by prominent experts. It was aware that there was criticism of the report on the grounds that it underestimated the consequences of the accident; that the research was limited in scope; and that long-term health threats were hard to gauge. Nevertheless, Japan was of the view that the report should be regarded as a basis for future international cooperation in the matter since it was the most comprehensive and authoritative one available to date.

At the bilateral level, Japan had signed in September 1990 a memorandum with the Soviet Union arranging reciprocal visits by experts to facilitate fact-finding and specific cooperation. In April 1991, on the occasion of President Gorbachev's visit to Japan, another memorandum was signed for the purpose of alleviating the health consequences of the accident for the affected populations and organizing exchanges of information and experts, conferences and symposia, a joint study and joint publications.

At the international level, in February 1991 Japan had paid to WHO a contribution equivalent to \$US 20 million to buy medical equipment for hospitals in Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. As the Secretary-General had recently observed to the

Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Chernobyl disaster had demonstrated in starkest terms the interdependence of the world today in matters relating to nuclear safety and therefore there was need of cooperation rather than assistance. His Government concurred fully with that view and intended to make the expertise it had acquired available to international endeavours in that field.

Mr. NAPALKOV (World Health Organization) said that he wished to brief the Council on the progress achieved in developing the International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident. The Programme, which was to be implemented under the auspices of WHO and which had been approved in May 1991 by the World Health Assembly, included the setting up of an international centre in the USSR. The International Programme focused on the clinical examination and treatment of exposed populations in the affected areas, with particular emphasis on the potential increase in brain damage, leukaemia and thyroid disorders. It would also analyse the medical problems brought about by the disaster, including the fields of psychology, nutrition and medical rehabilitation. It would also be concerned with extending knowledge about the effects to health of exposure to low doses of radiation as well as strengthening radiation emergency preparedness. It would complement the work carried out by the Radiation Effects Research Foundation at Hiroshima. With the assistance of resources provided by the USSR and the Government of Japan, pilot projects on the detection and treatment of disorders due to radiation were already under way as well as epidemiological studies on its longer-term effects.

Many of those effects such as cancers and genetic abnormalities would not appear for a number of years. Accordingly, the Programme should be continued for at least several decades. Its success would depend not only on the financial support of member States but also on the willingness to contribute their scientific and technical expertise. It was difficult at the current stage to assess accurately the overall financial requirements but they could be of the order of \$US 150 to \$200 million over the next 15 to 20 years, much of that amount being allocated to the provision of diagnostic and research instrumentation.

The nuclear accident at Chernobyl had had wide-ranging consequences in fields other than health: it was of the highest importance to maintain close collaboration between the different sectors involved. WHO had participated

actively in the work of the Inter-Agency Committee for Response to Nuclear Accidents and it was also a member of the newly established United Nations Task Force. In the field of health, the optimal solution would be to coordinate all the projects through the WHO International Programme. It was up to the international community to act in accord and decisively in working with the national and local authorities to help alleviate the adverse effects and the stress to which the exposed populations were subject and to document the large amount of data unique of its type which would otherwise be irretrievably lost.

Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that immediately after the Chernobyl accident, FAO had established a Standing Committee on Radiation Effects to coordinate the activities of all its interested divisions in studying and minimizing the consequences of the disaster on agriculture, food production and food trade. The Chairman of the Standing Committee had been nominated to represent the Organization on the Task Force established by the Coordinator for international cooperation to the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident; that ensured continued internal coordination within FAO and between FAO and other United Nations agencies. The Joint FAO/IAEA division of nuclear techniques in food and agriculture was participating on behalf of FAO in ongoing activities.

Major agricultural problems would continue in the areas affected by the accident for many years to come. A large amount of arable land has been taken out of cultivation because of contamination and rural life had been severely disrupted even when the inhabitants had been allowed to stay where they were. The FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission had prepared Guidelines for Radionuclide Contamination of Foods moving in International Trade, following accidental nuclear contamination. The relevant new IAEA recommendations would incorporate the Codex guidelines and the Soviet authorities had applied similar standards to those of the Codex to ensure safety of the food supply and establish consumer confidence in official market outlets. However, small-scale food producers normally provided up to 15 per cent of overall supplies and production remained severely disrupted, either because it could not meet the safety requirements or because it was not routinely subjected to control procedures.

The FAO/IAEA Joint Division would be preparing guidelines on countermeasures to be taken to reduce contamination of soils, crops and livestock and methods of reducing radioactive caesium levels in livestock and livestock products. In collaboration with the Norwegian Government, the Joint Division had developed a project for the use of caesium binders to reduce levels of radioactive contamination; the project had been submitted to the Task Force for funding. Among the projects submitted to the Task Force, 27 dealt with food and agriculture and a number of proposals were concerned with environmental effects related to agriculture, the majority of the projects having the aim of increasing the production of non-contaminated foodstuffs. The Joint FAO/IAEA division would assist the Task Force by reviewing and evaluating the projects submitted to it.

Mrs. SEMICHI (Algeria) said that five years after what was undoubtedly the greatest technological disaster, it was still not possible to assess the extent of the devastation. The direct impact on affected populations was aggravated by the closure of industrial enterprises and the deterioration, if not the devastation, of arable land in both Ukraine and Byelorussia. Tribute must be paid to the action of the authorities of those two Republics and of the USSR as a whole which had set up a national committee and sent experts on nuclear and other matters: that had helped in identifying the affected areas, organizing the necessary evacuation operations and assisting in mitigating the immediate consequences of the accident.

The extent of the disaster had given rise to an upsurge of solidarity in the international community and the United Nations had demonstrated its ability to mobilize on both the technical and financial level. The preparation of a Master Plan, the setting up of a special Task Force and the extensive programme which was being drawn up would also make it possible to assess accurately the nature of the assistance required. Her delegation hoped that at its current session the Council would provide the necessary impetus for effective and well-coordinated international action to be realized by the large-scale and appropriate assistance of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

That international cooperation already augured well since it was based on a vital human trait-solidarity. By drawing the lessons from the disaster and keeping in mind the solidarity and interdependence among nations it would be possible both to resolve pressing problems and to safeguard against other

major accidents of that kind. In the light of that experience and inter alia that of Bhopal, it would be desirable to devote more attention to preparedness for all types of technological accidents so that the United Nations system was adequately equipped in that sphere. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was an appropriate framework for that exercise.

Mr. ROBLES (Mexico) welcomed the continuous attention that the Council was devoting to the agenda item and the activities undertaken or envisaged by the United Nations system through the United Nations system Task Force. Mexico noted with satisfaction the forthcoming Pledging Conference convened to mitigate the effects of the Chernobyl accident.

The lessons of the Chernobyl disaster were very important in view of the varied and lasting effects of the accident, particularly on human beings and the environment. Mexico had always been a supporter of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy but it had always also strongly encouraged efforts at denuclearization, as was evidenced by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The end of the cold war had banished the threat of a nuclear war; it would be desirable if it also paved the way for the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. It must not happen that through lack of political will in the field of disarmament, the world ran the risk of a disaster infinitely more serious than that of Chernobyl. The United Nations must play a central role in multilateral disarmament efforts.

Mr. GROZDANOV (Bulgaria) said that his country, which was close to the disaster area, had endorsed the urgent appeal for international action to study and minimize the disastrous consequences of the Chernobyl accident. By that action, the international community would not only perform humanitarian work but it could also acquire experience and develop the scientific and technological potential to combat similar disasters. The problems were multidisciplinary by nature and no single country possessed the great technical, scientific and organizational capacity needed to solve them.

Bulgaria welcomed the efforts made in that sphere by the Secretary-General and by United Nations bodies, agencies and programmes, in particular in preparing a programme for coordinating the activities to be undertaken. It supported the efforts to translate the programme as soon as possible into specific measures in which it was very anxious to participate.

On the bilateral level, in addition to the measures already taken by the Government, Bulgaria had recently proposed to receive children from the affected areas.

The PRESIDENT said that the discussion had highlighted the feeling of human solidarity shown five years after the Chernobyl disaster. A good deal of work still had to be done in order to identify all the consequences of the tragedy, but the discussion had made it clear that there was a real will to cooperate and the coordinating role of the United Nations had been recognized. At the same time, the complexity of the problem and its multiple facets made it a global problem which could not be solved by limited interventions in water-tight compartments. The discussion had perhaps made it possible to tackle the matter as a whole and in the context of interdependence.

There had been references to the problem of preparedness against the danger of future disasters. In that connection mention had been made to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and to the accidents at Bhopal, Seveso and Three Mile Island which, although not on the same scale as that of Chernobyl, showed that security must not be concerned solely with military aspects. It would perhaps be useful for the United Nations to give some thought to a new concept of security which would encompass ecological, technological, social, economic and other aspects.

Miss ANSTEE (United Nations Coordinator for international cooperation to the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident) explained that the work which had been accomplished had been in large measure team work in which many partners had contributed under harsh constraints of time, space and the multidisciplinary nature of the problem. She paid a tribute to all those in Ukraine, Byelorussia and throughout the Soviet Union who had worked tirelessly to prepare the master plan in record time. The same went for the members of the United Nations system Task Force, who had achieved the impossible.

She was aware that many people had applied themselves during the preceding five years to mitigating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster and that some had given their lives for that end. But the work done was only the first stage in a long series of activities to be undertaken. The following stage, that of the Pledging Conference and the implementation of the programme, would be decisive. She had been very encouraged by the discussion

which the Council had devoted to the matter and she was confident that the following stage would make it possible to pursue the work undertaken in a direction which benefit directly the populations of the affected areas.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (agenda item 1)
(continued) (E/1991/100)

The PRESIDENT announced that the Secretariat had been informed that the names of candidates had been submitted for certain vacant posts on the committees of the Council. He therefore suggested that an item 19, entitled "Elections", for consideration during the morning of Thursday 25 July, should be added to the agenda.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.