

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMANDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

(Translation of Russian original)

"THE REHABILITATION OF LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE TERRITOIRES CONTAMINATED BY THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT : THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ETHOS APPROACH IN THE STOLYN DISTRICT"

16th November 2001

The conference brought together representatives of the Chernobyl Committee at the Soviet of the Ministries of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Education, the authorities of the district of Stolin, and the oblast of Brest, directors and professionals of the kolkhozes, the inhabitants of the contaminated localities, scientists from the National Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Agrarian Sciences, representatives of the European Union, the European Commission, the UNDP, the World Bank, members of the European interdisciplinary group ETHOS and other representatives of international NGOs.

The conference participants came to the following conclusions :

1. Numerous health, ecological, economic and social problems in Belarus, generated by the accident, have a durable character and remain the focus of attention of the administration of the Republic, researchers, and the world community. A series of factors, in particular the degradation of the economic situation, the disintegration of the USSR etc. have reinforced the consequences of this catastrophe. One of the decisive factors is also that the populations are lacking the knowledge which would enable them to have a certain autonomy in the evaluation of the authenticity of the information on the consequences of the catastrophe - which is often contradictory - and to take the measures which would allow them to reduce the radiological risks resulting from living in the contaminated territories.
2. Wide-ranging approaches undertaken by the State have enabled to reduce appreciably the negative consequences of the catastrophe. The protection measures in the public agricultural sector assure a production which corresponds to the norms and all things considered, to reduce the expected exposition dose of the population. However, in the private sector, the level of production exceeding the norms still remains very important. This is true notably for forest products. The solution to these problems demands a particular attention on the part of the local authorities. It is necessary also to think of the improvement of acknowledged approaches and the development of new methods in interaction with the population. For the protection of children, the measures adopted in the agricultural sector must be able to assure a production which corresponds to the most recent international radiological exposition norms.
3. The complex problem of the rehabilitation of the living conditions in the contaminated territories, which includes the restoration of economic and social activity, taking into account the necessity to secure the living conditions of the population, is becoming the foremost priority 15 years after the accident. This problem is without parallel throughout history due to its complexity and its scope. The current time is characterised by an intense search for approaches to the solution of the problem of rehabilitation. Moreover, it is important to continue the research concerning the health of the inhabitants of the contaminated territories.

4. Taking into account the above, the ETHOS project approach, financed by the European Community, which has been conducted since 1996 in the Stolyn district merits to be studied, developed and disseminated. This approach is complimentary to the Programme of the Belarussian State concerning the consequences of the accident. It is based on the involvement of the population and the local specialists in the management of the radiological situation, which necessitates the development of a specific radiological culture concerning life in the contaminated territories. The efficiency of this approach has been confirmed in practice, as well as in the context of this conference following the example of the villages of Olmany, Gorodnaia, Belaousha, Terebejov and Retchisa.
5. The participants of the conference call upon the organisms of the Belarussian administration concerned, as well as international organisations, to envisage a long term co-operation in the area of the rehabilitation of living conditions in the territories of the Republic affected by the accident, particularly in relation to economic aspects. One overall objective would be the development of a new project which would take into account the experience of the ETHOS project and which would associate both sustainable economic development and radiological rehabilitation.