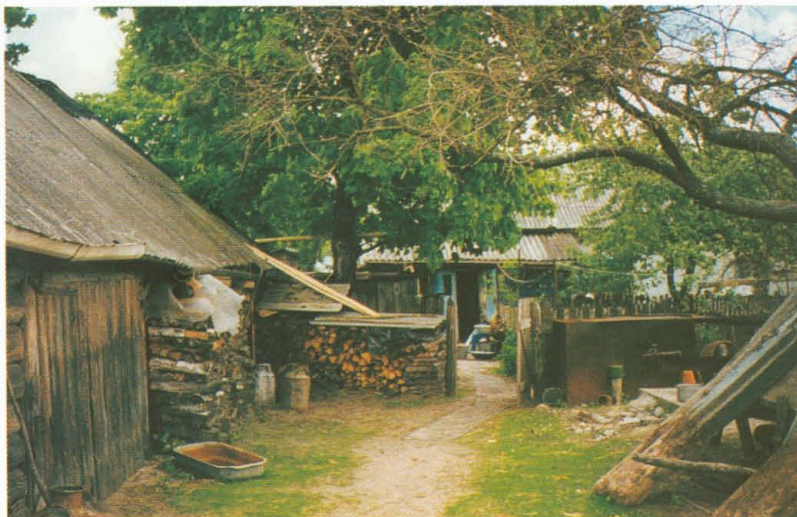




Assistance for affected areas and populations remains essential

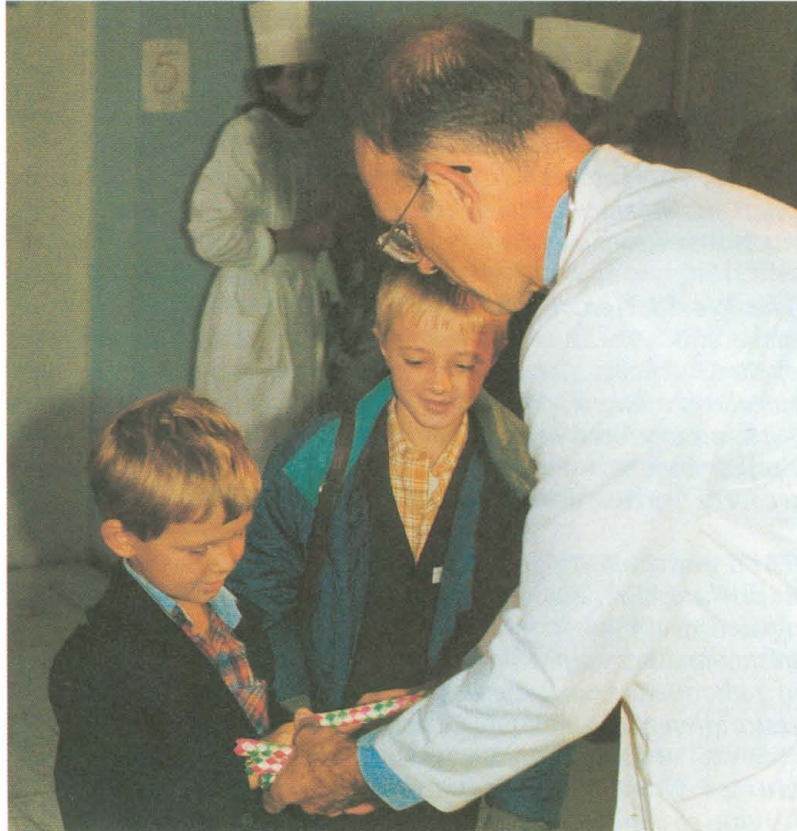
- The Chernobyl accident and its aftermath have had a major impact on the social and economic development and wellbeing of people in the most affected areas of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. Radioactive contamination of vast areas has impeded normal industrial and agricultural production.
- Addressing the post-accident situation has been complicated by political, economic and social changes over the past decade. This situation was compounded in the years after the accident by incomplete and, at times, inaccurate public information about the accident and alleviation measures.
- The psychological stress of residents in contaminated areas continues to be characterized by high anxiety, irritability, general feeling of hopelessness, fear about the future and inability to adjust. Such psychosocial effects have profound effects on the economic situation and on resources for health care. Training and education on radiation effects in the region need to be further strengthened in order to promote economic and social recovery.



*Some residents within the 30-km exclusion zone refused to be evacuated
credit:Eric Voice*



- The affected areas face a set of challenges in social and economic revival similar to those in other countries of the former USSR:
 - successfully operating farms and agro-industries while supplying the population with safe food products;
 - assuring ecological safety; and
 - improving social and economic infrastructure, including radically upgrading health and social support services.
- Over the past decade, much work has been directed toward protection of the populations and rehabilitation of the affected lands. Such rehabilitation efforts, carried out with support from the international community, have been directed toward economic, ecological and human health objectives:
 - In **radiation protection**: work is continuing on radiation protection measures to reduce the present doses received by people in contaminated areas.
 - In **agriculture and food supply**: efforts have been underway to modify cropping techniques to lower the radioactive content in food products to acceptable levels. Efforts to reduce contamination of milk and meat products have been successful by adding the "Prussian Blue" cleansing compound into ruminant's feed. Experiments also are being carried out to test and introduce alternative crops (such as rapeseed) that can be used to produce industrial products, rather than foodstuffs.
 - In **public health**: medical monitoring systems have been established in the countries to facilitate early diagnosis and treatment of thyroid cancer, leukaemia and other



*A team of medical doctors sponsored by the IAEA conducted check-ups on children at the City Polyclinic in Kozelets, Ukraine
credit: Mouchkin/IAEA*

malignancies in the affected population. Medical and dosimetry registries have been set-up to carry out epidemiological studies in order to provide decision makers with information for planning on health care systems in contaminated territories. Social and psychological education centres have been established at numerous sites in all three countries to rehabilitate affected populations.

- In the **energy sector**: sizeable grants and loans have been provided for promoting nuclear safety, for examining the decommissioning of Chernobyl and for rehabilitation of the energy sector.



***Principal examples of assistance activities
in the United Nations system:***

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has provided support for a wide variety of technical activities related to radiation safety, environmental monitoring and protection, power plant management and safety, agricultural rehabilitation and nuclear waste management

The World Health Organization (WHO) has supported a major effort, the International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident, in collaboration with other international and national organizations, to provide humanitarian support and improved health care to the affected countries. A follow up programme is underway focused on thyroid disease, accident recovery workers, dose reconstruction and psycho-social effects.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), together with the IAEA, has contributed technology and expertise on agricultural counter-measures to reduce radioactive contamination and has helped in improving knowledge of the migration of radionuclides in soils, forests and water bodies to facilitate restoration of contaminated areas.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has established nine social/psychological rehabilitation centres (locally known as "centres of trust") with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and a variety of bilateral donors.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been coordinating the aid activities related to Chernobyl within the three countries and assisting with improving environmental monitoring capacities.

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA) has played a coordination role in the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl, which ensures that all major donors are aware of assistance being provided and includes the European Commission.



Assistance from other International Organizations

The European Commission's (EC) Radiation Protection Research Action programme has implemented two thyroid research projects under the EC/Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) scientific collaboration agreement, and the EC's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has supplied specialist equipment and medicines for the diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of the children suffering from thyroid cancer for Belarus and Ukraine. EC technical assistance has included training for CIS medical staff, facilities for producing L-thyroxin tablets in the Chernobyl affected regions and measures to improve the production and distribution of iodized table salt in the affected regions. Other research projects include environmental problems and emergency preparedness.

The G7 has proposed a solution for the ultimate closure of the Chernobyl complex, short-term safety upgrades for units still in operation, plans for a new Chernobyl sarcophagus and waste retrieval facility and completion of two new reactors at other sites to replace Chernobyl units 1 and 3.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has created a special Nuclear Safety Account devoted to supporting safety upgrades and improvements for Soviet-designed nuclear reactors, with priority going to "high risk" designs such as the RBMK.

The World Bank has been providing concessional loans for energy development including conventional power generation, policy reforms, coal mining and electricity market development

International Atomic Energy Agency

Division of Public Information

P.O.Box 100

Wagramer Strasse 5

A-1400 Vienna, Austria