

Information message on some issues of liquidation of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident

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Confidential

On Some Issues of the Elimination of the Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident

The measures taken in the republic to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and reduce the negative impact of radiation on human health have generally received a positive response from the population.

However, during the implementation of the accident clean-up program, problems have arisen that reduce the effectiveness of the measures taken.

For example, a negative reaction from residents of the affected areas of the Rovno region has been caused by a shortage of medical workers in local healthcare facilities, where medical staffing levels range from 42 to 75 percent. The material and technical resources of organisations constructing medical facilities remain weak, and the number of radiological laboratories does not meet the needs.

According to leading dosimetry experts, the developed "Concept for Safe Living in the Ukrainian SSR," if all the conditions outlined within it are met, is capable of minimising the potential negative impact of the Chernobyl disaster on public health.

However, ensuring compliance with the basic principle of the concept—not exceeding the annual total dose of 1 mSv and 70 mSv is currently impossible using outdated instrumentation.

The sensitivity of domestically produced devices does not allow for recording a dose of 1 mSv in low-radiation environments. According to available data, equipment that meets current requirements is manufactured by the Hungarian company Gamma, the Finnish company Nokia, and the Italian company Selena.

In the republic, the Kharkov-based Scientific Production Association Monocrystal is developing such devices. Experts estimate that, if funded, it could manufacture them in the required quantities.

The issue of resettling residents of the affected areas remains urgent. According to Resolution No. 315 of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR dated December 14, 1989, residents of 669 settlements in the Zhytomyr region are subject to resettlement. Over 21,000 people have already received orders to resettle in ecologically clean areas.

However, the preparation of housing for displaced persons is unsatisfactory in some cases due to a lack of attention to these issues on the part of local authorities. For this reason, for example, only two of the 10 apartments allocated in Ternopol have been occupied by displaced persons, while in Lvov, 33 out of 40 have been occupied.

There are instances of displaced persons from the Ivano-Frankovsk and Dnepropetrovsk regions voluntarily returning due to negative attitudes toward them from the local population, caused by unresolved housing problems in these regions.

The poor quality of housing prepared for re-settlers has been noted in the Brusilovsky and Berdichevsky districts of the Zhytomyr region.

Local authorities are devoting some attention to addressing the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. In 1990, a similar program was developed and approved in the Chernigov region. However, its implementation has been slow, primarily due to a lack of necessary material resources.

To date, national authorities have not allocated funds to survey the radioactive contamination of the affected areas, and therefore a complete map of the contamination of forests, agricultural lands, populated areas, and other areas has not been compiled. Experts estimate the cost of this work at 7.3 million roubles.

In the Zhytomyr region, decontamination work has resulted in violations of regulations for the disposal of soil, building structures, and roofing materials.

In the city of Korosten, where soil contamination levels range from 555,000,000,000 to 1,110,000,000,000 Bq/km² [0.555-1.110 TBq/km²], 30,000 cubic meters of soil and 150,000 cubic meters of roofing are to be removed and buried at the Pripyat Scientific and Production Association. Currently, 3,000 cubic meters of soil and 57,000 cubic meters of roofing slate are ready for disposal, but due to a lack of transport, their unloading is being delayed. Contaminated roofing is being stored within the city limits, and the soil to be removed is being dumped into ravines. Hydrologists believe that during the spring floods, this could lead to radioactive contamination of the upper aquifers.

In the interests of attracting foreign scientific expertise to research into decontamination, epidemiology, and radiobiology, a regular meeting of IAEA representatives, scientists from Germany and India, the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, the Academy of Sciences of the Byelorussian SSR, and specialists from the USSR Ministry of Atomic Energy was held in the Zeleny Mys camp from January 21 to 24 of this year. An agreement was reached at the meeting to open the Chernobyl International Scientific Centre on April 18, 1991.

However, the negotiations failed to resolve the issue of funding for scientific research, nor the supply of the necessary equipment for these purposes.

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