

OPENING ADDRESS ON THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “LONG-TERM HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER”, JUNE 1–6, 1998, KIEV

V.I. Kholosha

Ministry of Ukraine for Extreme Situations and Problems of Population Defense from Chernobyl Disaster, Kiev,
Ukraine

Dear Conference participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very grateful for the opportunity to welcome the scientists, physicians, International Organizations and mass media representatives that take part in the 2nd International Conference “Long-term Health Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster” in Kiev — the capital of Ukraine.

There are few names in the world known better than “CHERNOBYL”. And only some events gave rise to more controversies among scientists, government members and public opinion. Within 12 years after the ChNPP Unit 4 accident its consequences are studied thoroughly. Now the experts have a general opinion about the occurrence, respective reasons and main consequences. However for the majority of the population throughout the World the accident is a mystery, an — event they are afraid of and do not fully understand.

The Chernobyl disaster was the most destructive accident in nuclear energy history. The radioactive fallout was in the main concentrated within the territory of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as they were closest to the power plant site. However radioactivity in low concentrations was spread across the main part of all the Northern hemisphere. Nowadays the populations of the most affected countries — Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine — remain residing under unfavorable conditions.

The Ministry of Ukraine for Extreme Situations and Problems of Population Defense from Chernobyl Disaster gives continual consideration to disaster consequences’ study and how to overcome them. The Chernobyl disaster medical consequences were summarized during International Conferences in Geneva, Minsk and Vienna. Thyroid gland oncological diseases and leukemia were related to the catastrophe’s radiological consequences. Apart from that, all the disease classes including oncological pathology incidence and prevalence growth remains in accident survivors. Chernobyl disaster consequences are a human chronic radiation exposure model.

The Chernobyl disaster and its consequences considerably affected the social-economical development and well-being of people in the three affected states. At the present time the straitened social-economical situation and high perception of radiation risk in survivors stipulate severe psychological stress with high anxiety, a general feeling of hopelessness and fear of the future together with adaptation inability.

Despite the difficult economic situation in Ukraine, considerable work is continued in the fields of radiation protection, agriculture and food products manufacturing. In the field of medicine the Ministry of Ukraine for Extreme Situations and Problems of Population Defense from Chernobyl Disaster Consequences renders feasible help towards supporting scientific programs, including survivors’ curative-prophylactic aid, children and disabled persons’ sanitation.

The Ukrainian twelve-year-long experience in overcoming Chernobyl disaster consequences convincingly testifies to the necessity for effective system creation for Chernobyl disaster survivors’ health protection and medical-social rehabilitation taking into account their somatic, neural-mental and social spheres synchronous correction. The scientific programs support concerning “low radiation doses” impact and accident consequences’ non-radiation factors effects studies in human is exceptionally urgent.

The consolidation of international efforts towards study of the Chernobyl disaster’s medical-social consequences and minimization is necessary for the solution of the important tasks described.

I sincerely wish you success in your extremely important work.