

Acting President of the General Assembly
Closing remarks at the commemorative meeting of the General
Assembly to observe the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe
28 April 2006

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to make a few closing remarks.

On this solemn occasion, we have heard telling testimony about the suffering caused by the Chernobyl nuclear accident of 1986 and we have paid tribute to all the victims of this disaster.

We have also been encouraged to learn the hard lessons of Chernobyl. These lessons apply not only to the importance of safe use of nuclear power, but also to the vital necessity of providing the public with credible and transparent information in the event of any crisis, and to ensuring broad public participation in decisions involving any potentially hazardous technology.

We have heard evidence of the ingenuity and creativity of efforts to overcome the impact of Chernobyl, through measures designed to protect the population from radiation exposure and to devise safe means of conducting agricultural activities in contaminated regions. We have also learned about costly and painstaking efforts by governments and the international community to mitigate the health consequences of the accident.

We have been heartened by accounts on the potential for the recovery of the region. The United Nations shift in 2002 from an humanitarian response to

the Chernobyl catastrophe, to one emphasizing social and economic development has been seen as offering real hope for the revival of communities blighted by the aftermath of the accident.

It is incumbent on all of us to turn this hope into reality, and to lend unabated international support the efforts of the Governments of the most affected countries - Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine - to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.