



UNESCO INAUGURATES CHORNOBYL CENTRES OF TRUST

In November 1994, UNESCO inaugurated five community centres to help victims of the Chornobyl disaster in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia cope with the largest civil nuclear catastrophe of all time.

UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Science, Adnan Badran officially opened these "Centres of Trust". Inaugurations took place in Ukraine's Ivankiv and Bordyanka, in Strechyn and Pershay in Belarus and Uzlovaya in Russia. These centres are representative of the nine UNESCO Centres which are currently operating.

Psychologist Lubow Horich, a Canadian from Toronto, Ontario, supervises the centres from an office in Kyiv. "Even answering basic questions can be of great help to victims," stated Horich. "This is why the social workers staffing the centres call them 'Centres of Trust'."

When the Chornobyl nuclear power plant exploded 26 April 1986, it permanently changes the lives of about 4.9 million people living in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. At first, the Soviet Union tackled this disaster alone, but quickly found it could not cope, so UNESCO and the three republics jointly established the Chornobyl Programme in 1991. They quickly recognized the need to help victims deal with the social and psychological trauma the disaster had caused. The original project was to build three pilot counselling centres. But the number quickly grew to nine, three in each of the affected countries.

UNESCO was responsible for carrying out the project with funding from the United Nations Children's Fund, German associations Diakonie, Caritas, Internationaler Hilfsfonds, as well as the Government of Canada. The total cost of the project so far exceeds US\$2 million.

The nine centres are either in areas where the victims were rehoused (Strechyn, Nikolskaya Sloboda, Borodyanka, Ivankiv, Slavutich) or are in or near contaminated zones (Persay, Bolhov, Uzlovaya). The Akasakovshina centre is next to a major clinic in a "clean" part of Belarus where 4,000 patients each year suffering from the effects of radiation come for tests lasting up to three weeks.

Each centre is staffed by three social workers and a manager. They also recruit day-care workers trained in psychology. Each of the three republics has a national coordinator who is a trained psychologist.

UKRAINE RECEIVES SECURITY ASSURANCES ON NPT SIGNING

When Ukraine signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in Budapest in December 1994, it received security guarantees from the U.S., Russia and the United Kingdom. For the record, following is the text of this memorandum:

The United States of America, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland -- Welcoming the accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear weapon state; Taking into account the commitment of Ukraine to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period of time; Noting the changes in the world wide security situation, including the end of the Cold War, which has brought about conditions for deep reductions in nuclear forces;

Confirm the following --

1. The United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the CSCE Final Act, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.

2. The United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used in Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

3. The United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the CSCE Final Act, to refrain from economic coercion

designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by Ukraine of the rights inherent in its sovereignty and thus to secure advantages of any kind.

4. The United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reaffirm their commitment to seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, as a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.

5. The United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reaffirm, in the case of Ukraine, their commitment not to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapons state party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, except in the case of an attack on themselves, their territory or dependent territories, their armed forces, or their allies, by such a state in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon state.

6. The United States of America, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will consult in the event a situation arises which raises a question concerning these commitments.

This Memorandum will come into effect upon signature.

Signed in four copies having equal validity in the English, Russian and Ukrainian languages.

Representatives of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

UNESCO designed the programme, recruited and trained the staff and supervises the project. The French Agence d'Architecture des Gobelins donated their services to design three of the centres for UNESCO. Despite serious economic problems, the governments have paid for most of the construction costs. Ukraine

and Belarus have Chornobyl Ministries and levy a 12 percent tax on salaries to finance a victims' fund.