

Chernobyl Forum Report (hereafter CFR) Chernobyl Children's Project International Rebuttal Statement

What is the Chernobyl Forum Report?

A multi-agency study published in September 2005 which states that overall 56 people were killed or have subsequently died, including 9 children from thyroid cancer - which could have been avoided – from the Chernobyl disaster.

Who was involved in compiling the report?

Study was made up of representatives from scientists from specialist UN agencies such as IAEA and WHO and the governments of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. There has been no representation from those scientists closest to the problems on the ground. The report does not mention the fervent dissents and contradictory evidence offered by respected scientists from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia who are working closely with the relevant patient population and include Professor Nesterenko and Bandazhevsky.

Pronuclear Framework

The IAEA report should be greeted with some suspicion when you consider an agreement, signed in 1959 between WHO and the IAEA. The agreement hinders WHO in its freedom to produce material regarding the consequences of Chernobyl without the agreement of the IAEA. The primary objective of the IAEA is the promotion of nuclear power plants in the world. Article III of the agreement states: 'The IAEA and WHO recognise that they may find it necessary to apply certain limitations for the safeguarding of confidential information furnished to them'. It imposes a kind of 'daktat' on WHO thus ensuring the absolute control of information on the dangers and risks of nuclear energy.

One Reason not to trust the IAEA on Chernobyl

The lead author of the CFR/IAEA report, Dr. Fred Mettler, testified in July 1992 before a U.S. Senate Subcommittee chaired by Sens. Joseph Lieberman and Alan Simpson. At that time, Mettler claimed that his agency had carried out the most extensive studies available, and found no discernible increase in thyroid cancer in children. Lieberman pressed Mettler on this issue because other witnesses reported alarming increases downwind from the disaster site, but Mettler held firm in his denials.

Five weeks after that hearing, WHO and the prestigious British scientific journal Nature shattered Mettler's credibility with a detailed analysis that showed an 80-fold increase in thyroid cancer, especially in children living in or near contaminated villages in Belarus. By 1992 there was ample evidence of a major increase in thyroid cancer in Ukraine especially in the regional children's hospitals in Chernihiv and Zhytomyr. If Mettler and his collaborators were in the least bit interested in comparing the incidence of thyroid cancer before and after Chernobyl, they could have easily reviewed the data from the central Institutes of Endocrinology in Minsk and Kyiv, where most thyroid operations were performed.

What is CCPI's response to the Report?

1. The report is only a 'snapshot' and not the 'full album' of the consequences. To have the full album NGO expertise such as ours, needs to be taken into account. Further snapshots should include the wealth of research and experience of medics, health professionals and

scientists working on the ground in the affected regions e.g. Professors Nesterenko and Bandazhevsky.

2. The vast experience amassed from Irish aid workers over 2 decades shows us a very different picture to the one being portrayed by the report primarily because we have seen, witnessed and heard the reality on the ground in each of the 3 countries. We have been with the children, their parents and we have been touched by their suffering. We recognise that many of the birth defects being seen have and do still exist in every country, however, based on our research we are convinced that the number of defects have increased.
3. The CFR/IAEA report adds legitimacy to the government's policies of repopulation of previously evacuated areas and re-cultivation of lands within radioactive zones. The IAEA reinvention report on the consequences of the disaster will be used to support the building of a nuclear power station 25 miles from the exploded reactor on the territory of Belarus and further encourages the vested interests of some who want an optimistic outcome to the Chernobyl disaster.
4. Experts from the University of Hiroshima analysed data on newly born babies of 30,000 stillborn fetuses in Belarus; researchers concluded on analysis that birth defects have nearly doubled since 1986 (UPI wire report July 14, 1994).
5. Overall, oncological illnesses among children in Ukraine have tripled since 1986 (Min of Health, Ukraine).
6. According to the US National Academy of Sciences most cancers from radiation exposure do not develop until up to 20 years after exposure. The highest incidence of cancer is expected to occur over the next decade, therefore no accurate assessment of the overall impact can be made until this period has expired. (US NAS).
7. Nuclear power has not solved and cannot solve what is inherent in the technology...its basic underlying drawbacks. It remains UNIQUELY dangerous, EXTREMELY expensive, and no nation in the world has achieved the ability to isolate lethal, long-lived radioactive waste from the environment.
8. Public opposition to nuclear power skyrocketed across the world following 26 April 2006. Nuclear power has been excluded from eligibility for Clean Development Mechanism credits under the Kyoto Protocol.
9. The US Academy of Sciences has stated that even low-dose exposure to ionising radiation can cause cancer. The risks are even greater than previously thought and there is no safe level or threshold level of ionising (manmade) radiation.
10. Every aspect of the nuclear cycle is dangerous, from the mining of the raw material (uranium) to the risk of an accident during the production of nuclear power (such as Chernobyl), to the highly radioactive waste at the end of the cycle. The risk of exposure right along the chain is enormous. **The safe disposal of nuclear waste has never been**

resolved. Since 19/11 the potential for **terrorist attack** on a nuclear facility has become a massive potential threat to global security. Chernobyl has been listed as 'high risk' potential terrorist attack given the 216 tons of lethal radioactive material - the results would be catastrophic.

CEO Adi Roche Comment

Having spent much of October and November 2005 in Ukraine and Belarus listening and observing filmmakers and journalists ask the same questions time after time I am convinced that they are asking the wrong questions. They ask about: 'How many people died? How many will die? Is this or that cancer or illness definitely caused by radiation? What is Chernobyl? How much radiation were you exposed to? Why do you all look so healthy? Show me the evidence.' Questions often with non specific answers or answers that do not satisfy the required neat logic. We seek absolutes in a situation where there can be no absolutes, no definitive answers for we ask the wrong questions. People expect to see something grotesque, distorted and are almost disappointed when people and things appear normal – the media are perplexed. But such expectations distract from the true affects, with no realisation that any dose is an overdose. Putting the burden of proof of radiation related injuries with the victims.

If we continue to seek only logical, rational answers we will constantly be diverted from the true picture. A picture of human and ecological fragility, a picture showing us how delicately balanced the relationship between man and nature is, a picture of how precarious life has become in the hands of man. The IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) in its September 2005 report on Chernobyl has done nothing to enhance our learning and knowledge about the scale of the tragedy as it adds further confusion by trying to find logical and finite answers while missing the whole human and environmental trauma. This report has further added unwitting support for the governments of the affected region's policy declaring the Chernobyl disaster officially over. The IAEA report adds legitimacy to the government's policies of repopulation of previously evacuated areas and re-cultivation of lands within radioactive zones. The IAEA reinvention report on the consequences of the disaster will be used to support the building of a nuclear power station 25 miles from the exploded reactor on the territory of Belarus and further encourages the vested interests of some who want an optimistic outcome to the Chernobyl disaster.

General Comment

Asking the IAEA to research the health consequences of Chernobyl is like asking the tobacco industry to research the consequences on health of cigarette smoking.

Common perspective on Report

CCPI has much to concur with in the report section on remediation policy and the UN vision for going forward e.g. need for ongoing monitoring of land, water and food. Development of long term sustainable projects for the stricken communities thus shifting from 'emergency to recovery'. This is in keeping with CCPI philosophy.

Where we concur with Chernobyl Forum Report

Practical Aspects

1. Continue to assess current, and predict future levels of human exposure and therefore contamination of foods and take the necessary remedial actions and long term countermeasures.
2. To inform the general public in affected areas about the persistence of radioactive contamination in food products and it's seasonal and annual variability in natural food products gathered by locals (e.g. mushrooms, berries, game, freshwater fish etc) as well as dietary advice and information about ways to prepare food to reduce radionuclide intake.
3. To inform the general public in affected areas about changing radiological conditions thus relieving public tension and concerns.

Scientific Aspects

1. Large scale monitoring of food.
2. To further develop a system of environmental protection against radiation, the long term impact of radiation on plant and animals should be further investigated in the highly contaminated Chernobyl exclusion zone.

Social/Economic Aspects

1. Chernobyl related needs should be addressed in the framework of a holistic views of the needs of both individuals and communities and of the societies as a whole.
2. Moving away from a dependency culture.
3. Efficient use of resources to ensure focusing on the most affected people and communities.
4. Seeking changes that are sustainable and long term, and based on a developmental approach.
5. Remediation measures and countermeasures in agricultural areas where poor soils have a high concentration of caesium transfer from soil to plants.
6. Continuation of rededication measures to improve pastures and grasslands as well as draining of wet peaty areas.
7. Restricting harvesting of wild food products such as game, berries, mushrooms and fish from 'closed lakes'.
8. Attention to be paid to the production of private farms in several hundred settlements and about 50 intensive farms in all 3 countries.