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Secretary-General

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TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTER CHERNOBYL TRAGEDY, SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS UNITED NATIONS

COMMITTED TO STANDING BY VICTIMS, WORKING FOR GREATER NUCLEAR SAFETY

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

As we today mark 27 years after the Chernobyl disaster, we honour the emergency workers who risked their lives responding to the accident, the more than 330,000 people uprooted from their homes and the millions of people living in contaminated areas who have long been traumatized by lingering fears about their health and livelihoods. The countless women, men and children affected by radioactive contamination must never be forgotten.

The affected area is still suffering from the impact of the accident. Environmental damage to food chains, land and water will in many cases last for years. At the same time, we can take heart from the fact that communities there now have the chance and, increasingly, the means to lead a normal life.

To pursue these hopeful prospects, the General Assembly proclaimed 2006-2016 a “Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development” for the affected regions. The United Nations Action Plan on Chernobyl reflects our full commitment to achieving the aims of the Decade by focusing on social and economic development, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and community self-reliance.

Those coping with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster are demonstrating great resilience. But they continue to need support. The Secretary-General calls on the international community to demonstrate generosity in helping affected regions as they strive for a long-sought return to normalcy.

The international community has learned a number of important lessons from dealing with the human consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. They are reflected in the study by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on “Linking Humanitarian and Nuclear Response Systems”, which draws conclusions that can be applied in other nuclear disaster situations worldwide. The Secretary-General calls for follow-up on the recommendations of the Study.

Today, 27 years after the Chernobyl tragedy, the Secretary-General reiterates the commitment of the United Nations system to stand by those affected by the Chernobyl disaster, and to work for greater nuclear safety and sustainable energy worldwide.

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