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**COMMUNICATION OF 9 SEPTEMBER 1997 RECEIVED FROM
THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BELARUS
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

The texts of a letter dated 9 September 1997 and of a memorandum submitted by the Government of the Republic of Belarus which the Director General has received from the Permanent Mission of Belarus are - as requested - reproduced for the attention of the General Conference.

"With reference to your letter of 31 July 1997 concerning our unpaid contributions to the IAEA Regular Budget and possible suspension of our voting rights at the 41st IAEA General Conference I have the honour to forward to you herewith a Memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Belarus on this matter. It explains a difficult financial situation of my country and requests the General Conference to take into consideration existing circumstances and to allow our delegation to vote at the 41st IAEA General Conference. I kindly ask you to issue this Memorandum as an official document of the General Conference."

**"MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

"On the subject of the unpaid contributions of Belarus to the IAEA's budget, the Government of Belarus has the honour to make the following statement.

"Belarus's difficult economic situation as a result of the transitional period associated with the restructuring of the country's economy and the need to provide social security for its citizens is aggravating the serious heavy burden imposed by the costs of mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

"The April 1996 International Conference: One Decade After Chernobyl, sponsored by the IAEA, the European Commission and the World Health Organization, in which more than 800 experts from 70 countries participated, confirmed the scale of the disastrous impact of the accident on Belarus's economy.

"For more than 11 years the Government of Belarus has been forced to make provisions in the national budget for a special allocation of funds to deal with the consequences of the most serious radiation accident of the twentieth century. The Government is forced to spend up to 20% of the budget each year on compensation for material damage, treatment of the growing number of cases of cancer, and psychological rehabilitation of the population. More than 155 000 people, for whom it was necessary to provide suitable accommodation and to create additional jobs, have been resettled from the areas most severely affected.

"The contamination of more than 20% of the area of Belarus, including 40% of its agricultural land, has caused tremendous damage to major sectors of Belarus's economy such as agriculture and forestry.

"A heavy burden has been imposed on Belarus by the costs of destroying military hardware in accordance with the Treaty on the Reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe and by the costs of dismantling nuclear weapons and transferring them outside the borders of Belarus in accordance with the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol.

"Since the Agency's inception, Belarus has always scrupulously honoured its financial obligations to the IAEA. It is only the extremely difficult economic situation in which Belarus has found itself in recent years for reasons beyond its control, as well as the disregard, in the case of Belarus, for the principle that a State's contribution should match its real ability to pay, that has resulted in the Republic's being in arrears with its contributions to the Agency.

"Belarus's debt that has accumulated over the last few years - amounting to US \$4 million - is the result of the legally unjustified and unjust decision taken by the United

Nations General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, to increase Belarus's assessment for the United Nations Regular Budget by a factor of more than one and a half, which led to an automatic increase in the country's assessments for the budgets of the specialized agencies, including the IAEA. Furthermore, until 1996 Belarus was placed in the category of "unshielded" States for calculation of its contribution to the IAEA's safeguards budget.

"Despite the difficult economic situation, the Republic of Belarus transferred US \$400 000 to the Agency in May 1997 in part payment of its arrears, which, in view of the above-mentioned circumstances, is a substantial sum for Belarus's budget. Belarus will take all the necessary steps to fulfil its financial obligations to the Agency.

"The Government of the Republic of Belarus requests the delegations of Member States at the forty-first session of the IAEA's General Conference to give favourable consideration to the question of maintaining Belarus's voting rights at the General Conference in the light of the foregoing."^{2/}

^{2/} It is suggested that, pursuant to Rule 42(b) of the Conference's Rules of Procedure and in line with past practice, this request be referred to the General Committee for consideration.

