

Statement by Ms. Natalia Petkevich
Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Republic of Belarus
Opening of the Photo Exhibition “Chernobyl Seen by Children”
11 December 2007

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Today’s event is significant for several reasons.

Firstly, the photo exhibition “Chernobyl Seen by Children” is organized in the framework of the UN General Assembly’s commemorative high-level plenary meeting on children. This means that joint efforts of the international community are needed to care for and protect the rights of Chernobyl-affected children. Chernobyl is by no means a secondary issue when child protection is in question.

Secondly, it is very symbolic that the exhibition is organized by three fraternal nations – the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Belarus. It is yet another testament to our joint objectives and community of interests.

Finally, it is evidence of the warm relations our countries have with UNICEF.

And, most importantly – at the exhibition you will find a photograph entitled “Life after Chernobyl”, where a child has captured a building under construction. This is, perhaps, the essence of what these children need. They don’t need our sympathy. They don’t need our condolences. All efforts should be put into development of the affected children and into sustainable development of the territories where they live.

“Chernobyl Seen by Children” means that these children and these territories have a future. This exhibition is the children’s vision, and we have to make sure their vision for the future materializes in a way they deserve it.