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Health Effects of Ionizing Radiation Released by Incorporated Radionuclides
(Chernobyl/DU etc)

For an End to the Cover-Up and the Conflicts of Interests

Michel and Solange Fernex

After the Chernobyl catastrophe, international bodies (IAEA, UNSCEAR, ICRP and Euratom), and national administrations, concealed the information, especially regarding the health risks. The information they released came too late and they did not consider it necessary to tell the truth to the victims. This flow of disinformations continues to this day.

Same is happening with the health effects of DU. Like in Chernobyl, those effects are due to incorporated radionuclides (Cs137 in Chernobyl, U 238 in persons exposed to DU).

However, half a century after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the official model of risk is still based on the external, very short but very strong gamma irradiation, released by the nuclear flash of the bomb. As Dr. Gentner from UNSCEAR repeated in Kiev (2001) : "I refuse to consider whether a dose is external or internal, what matters is the dose" (in "Atomic Lies", filmed report by W. Tschertkoff).

The ECRR report on the "Health effects of Ionizing Radiation Exposure at Low Doses for Radiation Protection Purposes" published in 2003 by ECRR (European Committee on Radiation Risk) shows the disastrous effects on cells and tissues, of incorporated radionuclides, emitting beta (Cs137) or alpha rays (U238) from inside the organism.

An early publication of the World Health Organization (WHO, Palais des Nations, Geneva 1957) warned about the consequences of the development of nuclear industry. A group of outstanding geneticists, convened by the WHO, including the Nobel Prize winner J.M. Muller signed following joint statement : "The genome is the most valuable treasure of humankind. It determines the life of our descendants and the harmonious development of the future generations. As experts, we confirm that the health of future generations is threatened by an increasing development of nuclear industry and the growth of the quantity of radioactive sources.... we also consider the fact of appearance of new mutations observed at people to be harmful for them and for their descendants".

Health effects should therefore be investigated independently by the UN body responsible for human health : the WHO.

This is unfortunately impossible regarding the health effects caused by radiation, because of the Agreement, signed in 1959 between the WHO and the international Agency for Atomic Energy, (IAEA), whose main objective is : "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world" .

Article 1, § 3 of this Agreement (Res. WHA-12-40) specifies that "whenever either organization proposes to initiate a program or activity on a subject in which the other organization has or may have a substantial interest (read : health effects of radiation), the first party shall consult the other with a view to adjusting the matter by mutual agreement". This clause should be amended, and simply read "the first party shall inform the other".

This Agreement explains why the WHO action plan for Chernobyl, IPHECA, launched as late as 5 years after the catastrophe, was designed by the IAEA, it explains why the proceedings of the WHO Chernobyl Conference (Geneva 1995) were never published, and why the inter-agency UN report on Chernobyl (6.2.2002), still indicates, against all evidence, that Chernobyl caused 32 deaths, 200 irradiated and 2000 thyroid cancers (in children and teenagers only), those being the IAEA and UNSCEAR, and not those of WHO and OCHA figures.

The reports on the Kazakhstan and the Polynesia testsites have also been written by the IAEA, including the health effects of radiation, which is utterly unacceptable.

Action plan :

1. Amendment of the WHO-IAEA Agreement (Res. WHA-12-40). Article 13 of this Agreements provides for the possibility of amendments every year, during the World Health Assembly, convening in Geneva with the Health Ministers of all WHO member states. An international lobbying campaign is required wrldwide.
2. Adoption by the WHO, ICRP, the UNSCEAR and the national radioprotection agencies, of the revised ECRR radiation risk model and recommendations on the "Health Effects of Ionising Radiation Exposure at Low Doses for Radiation Protection Purposes" (Brussels 2003)
3. Independent WHO and national medical research and studies of the effects of low level radiation from incorporated radionuclides (Chernobyl, DU, etc), on health and on the human genome.

This urgent action plan requires the combined efforts of radiation victims, NGOs, scientists, lawyers, and friendly national/international administrations.

Finally, a healthy, nuclear free world depends on "the development of an informed public opinion on those matters" , (WHO Constitution).

A public opinion, well informed of the real danger of radiation for the health of the actual and future generations, will refuse the risks of any so-called "peaceful" or military use of atomic material.

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