

CORRIGENDUM

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Summit Segment of the Conference

Corrigendum

The attached statement should follow the statement by
H.E. Justice D. F. Annan, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ivan Plioushch, Chairman of the
Supreme Council of Ukraine

I address you and all citizens of planet Earth, which was once a blooming oasis of life and which is now threatened with environmental self-annihilation.

I address you on behalf of the people of Ukraine - 52 million people with a long and distinctive history, a rich culture and a thousand-year-old tradition of statehood. The independent democratic Ukrainian State, which resumed its existence in 1991 as a result of the people's free will, is reaping the bitter harvest of 70 years of domination by a vicious totalitarian system, based on inefficient, heavily militarized industry and collectivized agriculture that, even with the best black earth in the world, cannot feed its own people.

The Soviet empire, which noisily bandied about the slogans of freedom, peace, democracy and prosperity, was in actual fact a wicked stepmother for all the peoples under its domination. Ukraine was no exception. It was turned into a province with a semi-colonial status, a source of raw materials and the most environmentally polluted appendage of the empire. And here is the result: in Ukraine, the mortality rate exceeds the birth rate; its people have begun to die out as a result of a combination of negative economic, social and environmental factors.

This negative state of affairs, however, does not paralyse our will; on the contrary, it is forcing us to set to work to create a full-fledged market economy and modernize industry and agriculture, which at the same time will help to improve the environment. Our ideal and our goal are to ensure the stable development of society, using the most up-to-date means to meet environmental needs. This is why Ukraine has signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity and fully supports the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. In our view, these instruments will become a kind of environmental constitution for the Earth.

In order to enable the people of Ukraine to attain the desired level of economic and social prosperity in conditions of stability and democracy, we wish to cast off the heavy shackles of excessively militarized industry and turn to production that meets human needs. But for this we need resources, vast resources. Where shall we find them? I would remind you that Ukraine, together with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and other republics of the former Soviet Union, began the movement to end the arms race and the cold war. Figuratively speaking, we have "given" the world the billions of dollars that were being used to deter the Soviet military threat. Such a threat no longer exists. It would only be fair if part of the world's huge expenditure on armaments - at least 20 per cent - were used to solve urgent economic and environmental problems of countries, including Ukraine, with economies in transition.

Ukraine is a model for other States in improving the system of global security, for it was our Parliament that proclaimed its intention to rid itself of nuclear weapons, and we have taken major steps in this direction by removing tactical nuclear weapons from the territory of Ukraine. Ukraine is prepared to assume all obligations with respect to the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We propose that the Black Sea basin be declared a nuclear-free zone so that it can be transformed into a region of peace, stability and cooperation in the name of progress.

The entire world knows about the tragedy of Ukraine - the Chernobyl disaster. The tragic experience of Ukraine, scarred by an atomic catastrophe, is not only our internal affair; it is also a global problem, and we are

convinced that, in order to survive, mankind must study and heed the lesson of Chernobyl. Ukraine cannot do this alone. Let us work together to transform Chernobyl into an area of global partnership and joint action to neutralize the destroyed Chernobyl reactor, decontaminate vast areas of land, water reservoirs and natural resources, bury radioactive wastes and solve the tremendous medical problems created by the disaster of the century. This will be a good lesson for the people of the twenty-first century.

Ukraine has proclaimed this day, 12 June 1992, as a day of national mourning for the miners who perished in an accident at a mine in the Donets Basin. I ask for your sympathy for the families of the victims.