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Attendance to the talk is free. However due to limited space available, those who are interested are required to complete the registration form and fax it to us. Alternatively, you may call Mr. Mohd Firhad Ahmad @ 03-91715394 or 012-7490678 to convey the information verbally.

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Environmental Health Talk

ECOLOGICAL LESSONS FROM THE 1986 CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT AND THE RECENT FUKUSHIMA TRAGEDY



Prof. Dr. Nigel Bell

FIEEM, FRSA, MHEA, CEnv

Emeritus Professor of Environmental Pollution

Centre for Environmental Policy

Imperial College

London, UK

Date : 1st June 2012

Time : 3.00 pm

Venue : UNU-IIGH Lecture Hall



ECOLOGICAL LESSONS FROM THE 1986 CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT AND THE RECENT FUKUSHIMA TRAGEDY



Emeritus Prof. Dr. Nigel Bell

THE SPEAKER

Nigel Bell is Professor of Environmental Pollution and Director of the MSc in Environmental Technology. He has carried out research for over 35 years on the effects

of air pollution on crops, trees, native vegetation, mosses, lichens, herbivorous insect pests and plant fungal and viral pathogens in both the UK and a number of developing countries.

He is also active in research into contaminant pathways in the environment, particularly radionuclides, predicting dose to humans via air-soil-plant pathways. In addition he has interests in other environmental management issues, including life cycle assessment and environmental auditing. He has been specialist adviser 7 times to enquiries of House of Commons and House of Lords Select Committees. Currently he is a commissioner on the Greater London Authority's Sustainable Development.

TALK SYNOPSIS

On 26 April 1986 the world's worst nuclear accident occurred at Chernobyl in the Ukraine, resulting from an illicit and unauthorised experiment by the station staff, exacerbated by a fundamental design fault in the reactor type. The ensuing consequences were evacuation of all the local population and establishment of a large exclusion zone around the reactor. In this talk, the science of radioecology will be described together with what happened at Chernobyl. The plume from the burning reactor contaminated large areas of Europe, including northern and western parts of the UK.

The bulk of this talk will concentrate on the consequences for the UK in terms of contaminated food chains. At first, it appeared that the problem of contamination was rapidly disappearing, but it was discovered that sheep in upland areas contaminated with radio caesium were showing a progressive increase in radioactivity. This was contrary to what had been anticipated by the authorities and led to massive restrictions being placed on the movement and sale of sheep in the areas concerned. This had a massive effect on the rural economy of many parts of Cumbria and North Wales, with some restrictions remaining to this day. The reasons for this unexpected behaviour will be explored with the ecological processes involved being highlighted. The talk will finish with some comparison with the Fukushima accident, resulting from the Japanese tsunami in February 2011.