

**IRRS MISSION TO USNRC EXIT MEETING**

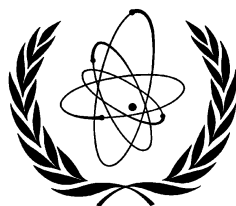
**Washington, DC USA**

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**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

Mister Chairman, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, my dear colleagues, Good Morning.

Two months ago yesterday I took office as DDG for Safety and Security at the IAEA. In these two months, I was privileged to survive my first General Conference after two weeks in office, and today, it is a privilege for me to take part in the conclusion meeting of the Integrated Regulatory Review Service of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**It is a privilege** because this is the review of the longest established nuclear regulatory authority in the world, which serves as a model for many countries, and which supervises the largest number of Nuclear Power Plants in the world.

**It is a privilege** to see the result of a careful preparation launched in 2007 by Dale Klein, and continued under the Chairmanship of Greg Jaczko. Very hard work has been performed by the NRC during a more than two-year preparation, going through the self-assessment process, and peaking during these two weeks in providing the team with the information and facilities they needed to do their job efficiently and effectively.

We are grateful for this commitment and support, to Chairman Jazcko, to the Commissioners, the Executive Director of Operations, Bill Borchart and the NRC staff directly involved in the IRRS program, in particular Marty Virgilio and his staff.

This commitment goes well beyond the mission and is demonstrated by the proactive involvement of the United States in supporting the IAEA over many years. The United States have provided experts for many of the IAEA's IRRS missions over the years and I would like to thank the NRC for this valuable contribution, and to encourage the continuation of our cooperation in this area.

**It is a privilege** also to see at work a most distinguished peer review team of 20 prominent safety specialists from 14 nations, under the expert guidance of Jukka Laaksonen and Kuniyisa Soda. Through these two long and difficult weeks, you have generously contributed your valuable time and talents, in a strong spirit of helping and learning from each other. In the name of the IAEA, I address to you my sincere thanks.

**The message** carried over to IAEA Member States by this IRRS mission is full of significance. It gives a prominent visibility to the work accomplished by the United States to enhance its regulatory effectiveness; and, through the commitment made by the USNRC to consider additional ways to use IAEA safety standards, it gives a prominent visibility to what I would like to call the universality of the IAEA safety standards which serve as the Benchmark to this review.

At a time where many countries have decided to develop a nuclear power programme, and are in the process of setting up or strengthening their regulatory framework, **the example given today** by the United States, and before that by the 12 countries where IRRS

missions have been conducted, most recently in Russia and China, - **this example**, strengthens the message about the necessary dedication to a responsible, safe and secure approach to the development of nuclear power program.

**This example** goes a long way towards supporting the work of the IAEA in strengthening safety. This is a goal that we seek to achieve globally through the development of Safety Standards, peer reviews and advisory services to provide advice and guidance on developing a safety infrastructure to Member States. The IAEA safety guide on “the establishment of a national nuclear safety infrastructure for a nuclear power program” was approved by the Commission of Safety Standards last month. It considers having an independent and effective regulatory body that fully applies the IAEA safety standards in the different stages of the nuclear development. IRRS missions, carried out at the appropriate time in the development of the nuclear power program, provide valuable insights into how best to reach that goal.

The IRRS has become an internationally accepted process in strengthening regulatory activities and it gained prominent position worldwide. Member States, in calling for an IRRS mission demonstrate their openness and transparency to the nuclear community. They recognise the importance of subjecting their activities to an external peer review, identifying areas for further improvements, and in addition, through disseminating and sharing

good practices and lessons learnt, they provide a valuable benefit to the global nuclear safety regime.

As you know, a recent European Directive calls for peer reviews of a country's nuclear regulatory bodies. In recognition of the value of the IRRS program, this will be achieved through cooperation with the IAEA and a programme of IRRS missions will fulfil this objective. The IAEA will coordinate this programme within its broader global IRRS programme so that learning continues to be shared to the maximum extent possible.

I understand that, following good former practices, the USNRC intends to request a follow-up IRRS mission in about two years time. This has been shown to be extremely valuable in demonstrating the commitment of the regulator to continuous improvement. It also provides an opportunity to look at additional areas that would benefit the regulatory body. As seen from the IAEA, the time of this follow-up mission might well be very suitable indeed to address the activities related to new builds.

I would like to conclude by again congratulating the NRC staff, the experts and the IAEA team for their dedication and professionalism. I hope that this mission has provided valuable insights that the NRC can use in pursuing its drive for regulatory excellence. I am convinced that other countries will also benefit from the recommendations, suggestions and good practices identified.

Thank you for your attention.