

TSO Conference reception

Monday 25 October, hotel NIKKO

Welcome

I missed the first TSO conference in 2007. This was a double misery for me, in that I spent the biggest chunk of my career working in a TSO, namely IPSN, and I have a soft spot for Aix-en-Provence where I spent the first six years of my professional life, under the sun, listening to “le chant des cigales” the song of the cicadas.

Thanks to this second conference, to the dedication of its organisers, and particularly to JNES and the Japanese government, it is a great pleasure for me this evening to reconcile myself with the past, and to welcome participants who have come to Japan to address the challenges to TSOs in the years to come.

This conference in Japan, a country with a longstanding history of nuclear safety research, gives me the opportunity to better link my previous lives, mainly though not uniquely, turned towards Europe, with the worldwide responsibilities of the IAEA, which have become mine.

I have a strong belief that safety and security must be very closely linked to science and research. More than a belief, it is a conviction, based on hard facts.

First, technology is a science in progress, its implementation in nuclear energy development must be matched by safety focused research.

Then, there is a duty to answer questions and preoccupations of Society. Society has a right to know, to understand from credible sources, the level of technological risks associated with energy choices, with nuclear energy choices. Only a sound scientific basis can answer these expectations.

And finally, the continued strengthening of safety worldwide relies on the questioning attitude of those responsible for assessing risks associated to radioactivity. This questioning attitude is consubstantial –the essence--to research, and close links between safety experts and research is the best assurance that all questions will be asked. This is a necessary step before getting the answers!

There are many models around the world for asking questions and answering them in the fields of safety and security. You have embedded TSOs, independent TSOs, and multiple TSOs. There are

common, global needs: to strengthen their interactions through networks, to offer their invaluable knowledge and experience to those who need it, to foster a dissemination of their values.

These are global challenges that we shall address during the Conference, which are more and more an intrinsic part of TSOs life today and that are a growing part of our work and responsibility today at the IAEA.

I am looking forward to the debates and conclusions of this week, and again thank our hosts for organising this conference, so necessary for a responsible approach to the development of nuclear energy.