

## **Convention on Nuclear Safety**

### **5<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties**

**IAEA 4-14 April 2011**

**Vienna, Austria**

#### *D.Flory (DDG-NS) Opening Statement*

Mr. President, Officers, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome all of you to the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

At the onset I would like to express on behalf of the IAEA Director General and myself our sympathy and condolences to the people of Japan for the tragic events that have impacted the country.

The 5<sup>th</sup> RM of the CNS starts at a time that the nuclear power industry faces a most important challenge. The earthquake and tsunami that damaged the Fukushima Daiichi NPP have shown that natural phenomena are merciless and that more is still needed to effectively protect NPPs from such external hazards. Having said that we also need to recognize that the defence in depth concept applied by the nuclear industry associated with the skills knowledge and bravery of Fukushima's NPP operators and all other personel that have worked to mitigate the accident have passed an extreme test and were able to control an accident that could have developed in a catastrophic situation. The time is now for reflections, evaluations, conclusions and taking informed actions. It is time for the international nuclear community to demonstrate the strength of working and learning together and with modesty and competence ensure that nuclear energy can continue to be used in a safe and reliable manner.

As you are already informed, the IAEA is organizing **today** a side event on Fukushima Daiichi Accident. This event will include presentations by specialist from **NISA, TEPCO** and some **initiatives** from other Member States. This event will be open to all IAEA Member States.

I would like to inform you that, in cooperation with the government of Japan and Japanese experts, the IAEA is planning to organize in June 2011 a High Level International Conference to discuss policy and technical issues, regulatory implications, lessons learned and future actions following the Fukushima Daiichi accident. Specific sessions will be devoted to topics such as: design of NPPs against external events, coolability of spent fuel in accident conditions, accident management under catastrophic situations, emergency preparedness and response. The IAEA safety standards and the regulatory actions before, during and after the accident will also be discussed.

The CNS has now 72 Contracting Parties, and the results of the 5th RM will be a representative input from the international nuclear community for defining the detailed scope and contents for the Conference.

Let me turn now to other IAEA activities that are relevant to your discussions during the next 2 weeks.

As requested by the Contracting Parties the IAEA prepared, in 2009, a report on “Major Trends and Issues in Nuclear Safety”. The report provides the views of the Agency both: based on its Safety Review Services and on its own perception of the significant issues and trends of a more global nature. I would like to quote the IAEA report on two of these issues that will certainly be discussed in depth in the backdrop of the Fukushima accident. As the 2009 report states:

In general, States with nuclear installations tend to have emergency preparedness and response capabilities to deal with localized emergencies. Existing emergency plans do not always consider all possible accident scenarios and there is a need for improvement in public communication plans. In addition there are not always adequate planning arrangements in place for the interface between on-site and off-site local emergency plans. Such arrangements, when established, need to be exercised on a regular basis. There is a need to pay continued attention to the conduct of the local and national exercises to test national preparedness.

Recently strong earthquakes that have exceeded the original seismic design levels have affected existing nuclear power plants. The plants have been shut down for long periods of time for evaluation, reassessment of the hazards and upgrading of the facility. Other extreme natural phenomena such as tsunamis, storm surges, tornadoes and hurricanes have also occurred. Updating and revising current safety standards is an ongoing process.

The 4th review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety concluded that “Many Contracting Parties reported about their positive experiences with IAEA Missions, especially IRRS and OSART missions, and recognize their importance. Contracting Parties that have not received these missions are encouraged to do so.”

We expect that these issues will be discussed in the national reports of contracting parties and in the country groups.

Many Members States are now planning and preparing to embark on a nuclear power programme. The Secretariat is aware that there is a limited safety infrastructure in these countries.

Therefore, the IAEA is pursuing all available mechanisms to increase awareness of decision makers about the safety commitments both at national and international levels that countries will have to assume if a decision to embark on a NPP is made.

The IAEA is also concerned by the impact on safety that may be caused by the reduction of staff and budget observed during IRRS missions in some countries and has given recommendations to these countries.

At the 4th RM Contracting Parties expressed the need for new countries to join the CNS. It is essential to encourage new countries to become Contracting Parties to the CNS and other Conventions before they start building NPPs or at least before they start loading the nuclear fuel. Contracting Parties particularly those with mature nuclear power programmes will need to engage in this effort.

In 2010, the Commission on Safety Standards has approved for publication a safety guide on the Establishment of the Safety Infrastructure for a Nuclear Power Programme. This safety guide is being used to structure the assistance that the IAEA is providing to embarking countries for the gradual application of the IAEA safety requirements during all phases of development of the nuclear power programme.

Finally, I would like to note with satisfaction that the secure CNS Website for posting questions and responding to them proved again to be effective and efficient for the Contracting Parties and to the Secretariat. The website has been improved since the last RM according to the feedback of requests of the CP.

In times of crisis, maturity must prevail. The CNS is today a mature international safety instrument and the 5<sup>th</sup> RM will be the forum to demonstrate the value of our joint work.

I wish you a successful meeting.