

### Joint Convention – DDG-NS Opening Remarks

- Mister President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you.
- It is a pleasure for me to welcome you in Vienna and to open the 4th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.
- This Joint Convention entered into force in 2001 and its review process has matured and significantly contributed, as an element within the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Framework, to increase the level of safety worldwide.
- Since the last review meeting in 2009, the number of contracting parties has increased from 48 to 63 and it is important to maintain the effort through the work of the secretariat and, with your support, for continuing to increase this number. Indeed, all States with a nuclear power programme are meant to address at some time the management of their spent fuel, so are all States operating research reactors, and they should follow the example your country has given in being Party to the Joint Convention.
- I would like to take the opportunity of these opening remarks to recall the 3 main objectives of the Joint Convention:
  - 1) To maintain and achieve a high level of safety worldwide,
  - 2) To ensure that during all stages of spent fuel and radioactive waste management there are effective defense against potential hazards and
  - 3) To prevent accidents with radiological consequences and to mitigate their consequences should they occur.
- There is evidence that safety has progressed worldwide and that Contracting Parties are continuously working towards reaching these objectives, however, one cannot forget the accident that happened at the Fukushima NPP now some 14 months ago.
- Since the accident the Agency and its Member States have been active in analyzing and learning the lessons from the event and the IAEA nuclear safety action plan has been unanimously approved by the 55<sup>th</sup> General Conference in September 2011.
- The implementation of its actions has already started and I would just mention the International Expert Meeting on reactor and spent fuel safety which took place in Vienna in March 2012 and which in particular addressed the issue of the safety of spent fuel.
- I want to take this opportunity to inform you about another International Experts' Meeting, relevant to the Joint Convention, that the Agency is organizing in Vienna in late January 2013. This meeting will be dedicated to decommissioning and remediation after a nuclear accident. It will highlight the near-term and longer term issues that may need to be addressed during decommissioning of facilities and remediation of the offsite environment affected by a nuclear accident.

- The Fukushima accident and its consequences clearly reinforce the essential role of the Joint Convention and the importance of its regular review Meetings, and recall the need to constantly work towards achieving its 3 main safety objectives.
- The Joint Convention belongs to its Contracting parties, as Conventions do. In this regard, the role of the contracting parties is of major importance both in ensuring that the review process is efficient and continuously improved, and in promoting the Joint Convention and the benefits of adhesion for countries, in particular for those countries which plan to embark on nuclear energy.
- I am convinced that this 4<sup>th</sup> review meeting of the Joint Convention will allow demonstrating that the safety of spent fuel management and the safety of radioactive waste management have again progressed further and will contribute to identify the elements that will make the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste even safer.
- I also draw your attention to the interesting topics that have been proposed for the Open Ended Working Group sessions of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- The ten-day meeting that you all have in front of you will certainly be intense and give ample opportunities for fruitful discussions and I look forward to the very constructive results you will achieve at the end of the meeting.
- I wish you a successful 4<sup>th</sup> review meeting.
- Thank you for your attention.