

IRRS MISSION TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

EXIT MEETING

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Wednesday, 14 December 2011

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Department of Nuclear Safety and Security

Director General, ladies and gentlemen, my dear colleagues, Good Morning.

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you in Abu Dhabi at the exit meeting of the Integrated Regulatory Review Service mission to the UAE. It also gives me a great pleasure to be in such a warm and sunny city in the middle of December!!! My only regret is that I forgot my sunglasses and my sun tan lotion!!!

As you know, in the five years since its launch, the IRRS has become a key component in the IAEA's services to all those Member States seeking to continuously improve their regulatory infrastructures for safety and to contribute to the global safety regime.

This is a privilege to be at this exit meeting because the UAE has made a fundamental contribution to the IRRS programme. The UAE is among the *first* countries to receive an IRRS mission at an early stage of its nuclear power programme – active review of its first construction license application – which we refer to as Phase 3 of the Agency's "Milestones document". In addition, the IRRS presented an opportunity to consider IAEA Safety Guide SSG-16 for embarking countries to establish safety infrastructure for a nuclear power programme, to be used to gauge progress of their development.

I am privileged to be here too, because the UAE is among the countries that are at a very advanced stage in their nuclear programme, which is going in parallel with establishing FANR as a very competent regulatory body, addressing the full scope of regulatory oversight in the UAE and doing so to high standards, and, as I am sure the IRRS report will show, doing so to the extent possible in accordance with IAEA requirements.

The UAE is engaged in an ambitious programme to establish its nuclear capacity and improve its radiation technologies across all sectors. It is undertaking this programme at a difficult time due the recent tragic nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants in Japan; circumstances which have seriously affected the nuclear community worldwide. I am pleased to learn that the UAE, through FANR, has been successful in addressing public concern, and continue with the programme maintaining a conscious approach to safety, transparency and openness.

This mission has shown that FANR and its dedicated staff are addressing these challenges with focus and professionalism. I trust the exchange of knowledge and experience at the heart

of the IRRS peer review process will have given FANR new ideas and a renewed determination to maintain its improvement path.

It is a great pleasure to see the result, once again, of careful and thorough preparation under the auspices of FANR senior management. Very hard work has been performed by everyone at FANR during this long preparation, including the tough self-assessment process, and peaking during these last 10 days in providing the IRRS Team with the information and facilities they needed to do their job efficiently and effectively. I was also impressed by the fact that the IRRS Team considered the way FANR prepared and presented the Advanced Reference Material to be a model that should perhaps be followed by other Member States. This confirms once again the importance of the preparatory phase, as was strongly supported by Senior Regulators' meeting.

We are grateful for this commitment and support, to His Excellency Ambassador Hamad Al Kaabi, the Director General, the senior management of FANR and all the FANR staff directly involved in the IRRS programme.

This commitment goes well beyond the mission and is demonstrated by the proactive involvement of the UAE in supporting the IAEA over the years. The UAE has provided experts for the IAEA's activities, including some IRRS missions. In addition some of FANR staff are members of Safety Standards Committees, and I would like to thank FANR 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 distinguished peer review team of 13 international experts with a comprehensive spread of expertise, from 12 nations, under the expert guidance of IRRS Team Leader Mr Carl-Magnus Larsson. Through these 10 long and arduous days, you and your team 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 UAE to enhance its regulatory effectiveness; and, through the commitment made by the FANR to consider additional and more effective 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.

The IRRS has become an internationally accepted process in strengthening regulatory activities and has gained a 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 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, peer review missions particularly IRRS, are at the heart of the Nuclear Safety Action Plan adopted by the IAEA GC on 22<sup>nd</sup> September in the wake of the Fukushima accident. The commitments of 151 Member States to implement this Action Plan give an even greater visibility and status to IRRS missions, and to the Safety Standards that form their basis.

Mission such as this one to the UAE are critical in ensuring that lessons learned and good practices are shared between all MSs, applying transparency measures that come across the whole of the Action Plan.

I encourage the UAE, following good practice, to request a follow-up IRRS mission in two to three years time. The follow-up missions have 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.

I would like to conclude by again congratulating the FANR staff, the international experts and the IAEA coordinators and support staff for their dedication and professionalism. I trust this mission has provided valuable insights that FANR will 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.

Finally I would like to thank the Senior Management of FANR for the spirit in which they took the results of this IRRS mission. This spirit truly reflected a desire and commitment to continuous improvement.

Thank you for your attention.