

Chairperson's Summary

I am pleased to say that this has been a very good meeting, and we have addressed some very important topics together.

Firstly, we discussed the coordination of international support for the regulatory bodies of States considering developing or expanding nuclear power programmes. In the panel discussion, several speakers noted the importance of regulatory bodies' remaining focused on maintaining the safety of existing nuclear power plants even as worldwide interest in new nuclear construction increases. In addition, the importance of sharing operational experience feedback worldwide was discussed.

The panellists also emphasized that embarking on a nuclear power programme is a long term commitment, which requires a sustainable, properly funded regulatory infrastructure. It was also recognized that multilateral initiatives and regional cooperation can significantly help in support of international coordination and harmonization of regulatory matters. To that end, panellists stressed that receiving international support and assistance cannot relieve a recipient regulatory body of its national responsibilities for establishing regulations and for enforcing them.

The group acknowledged the development of the IAEA draft Safety Guide (number DS424) on establishing a legal and regulatory framework for safety for a national nuclear power programme. This document will provide guidance to "newcomer" States on how to incorporate the IAEA safety standards into their domestic regulations.

Finally, it was agreed that issue of coordinating international support for the regulatory bodies of countries embarking or expanding their nuclear power programme should be further discussed at the forthcoming international conference on Effective Nuclear Regulatory Systems in Cape Town, South Africa in December 2009.

The second panel discussion focused on long-term management strategies for disused radioactive sources. We heard discussions on a variety of issues relating to radiation source.

Because of the large number of facilities and activities to be controlled, an integrated regulatory approach, including a comprehensive national registry of sources, would be beneficial.

There is also a need to continue addressing the issues identified at the meeting held in June–July 2009 on the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources (IAEA, Vienna 2004), including repatriation issues, the availability of storage capacity, a strategy and

solutions for the disposal of disused radioactive sources, and the mapping and/or monitoring of radioactive sources.

The group considered the idea that the management of disused sources is the weakest point in the chain of control over radioactive sources. One option for remedying the situation is to facilitate the exchange of information and experience on the implementation of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (IAEA, Vienna, 1997) and the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

It was not clear whether the international community would be ready for the preparation of a Convention on the management of radioactive sources. It was clear, however, that it is necessary to strengthen the implementation of the Code of Conduct in relation to this weak point. The group also acknowledged that it would be beneficial to examine all relevant instruments relating to safety and security in an integrated manner.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the IAEA can play — and already has played — a beneficial role in both areas of discussion through the following:

- Provision of support to regulatory bodies and sharing of knowledge and experience;
- Capacity building, including education and training, peer reviews and knowledge networks;
- Provision of support to ‘new entrants’ to nuclear power before a contract is signed;
- Enhancing harmonization through the application of safety standards and the utilization of safety services, including international regulatory review services (IRRS);
- Working with Member States to prioritize requests for support, assist Member States who have offered support in leveraging their resources, and encouraging regional cooperation.

I very much look forward to continuing our discussions on these and other important topics at the International Conference on Effective Nuclear Regulatory Systems in Cape Town in December 2009.