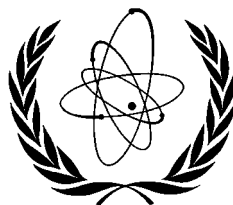


Closing Remarks – International Forum on Spent Fuel Management

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International Atomic Energy Agency
M Building (2nd floor), Boardroom A
Vienna, Austria



Mr. President, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We come to the end of another important and timely conference on the management of spent fuel from Nuclear power reactors. As our deliberations come to a close, I am convinced that each of us has obtained a more up-to-date and broader understanding of the issues and objectives with regard to safe, secure and sustainable waste management handling of spent fuel.

Since the previous conference in 2006, significant developments have taken place, namely: the increasing concerns over climate change; the economic turmoil; and the need for increasing and reliable energy supply. In the meantime, the Joint Convention has met twice and emphasised the need for comprehensive national strategies on the management of spent fuel—an issue emphasised throughout this conference.

Furthermore, significant technological developments are taking place that will optimize the use of uranium resources and important developments are taking place in nuclear fuel processing and recycling technologies

Despite some setbacks, however, noticeable progress is being made with geological disposal. The debate on this and other issues is not closed, and you as waste management experts have become acutely aware that overall confidence must be enhanced in a much wider audience if a decision to implement geological disposal is to be acceptable.

The value of international collaboration at the back-end of the nuclear fuel cycle becomes increasingly evident and the international organization particularly, the IAEA—is willing and prepared to play its role in supporting and facilitating such collaboration.

The Agency will carefully evaluate the deliberations at the conference and adjust its programme to respond to the evolving circumstances.

It remains only to express my sincere thanks to those who contributed to the success of this conference, in particular: to President Anil Kakodkar, the programme committee, the speakers and panel members and the Agency staff.

Finally, I hope that you have found the presentations, discussions and the exchange of information this week useful and notably improved from the last meeting in 2006. On a personal side, I would like to also announce that I will be leaving the agency at the end August; however, I hope to see you again at the next Spent Fuel Conference or other meetings on Spent Fuel Management. I wish you a safe return to your home countries. I now declare this conference closed.

Thank you for your attention.