

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' MEETING
ON
REACTOR AND SPENT FUEL SAFETY IN THE LIGHT OF THE ACCIDENT AT THE
FUKUSHIMA DAIICHI NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

DDG Opening Remarks

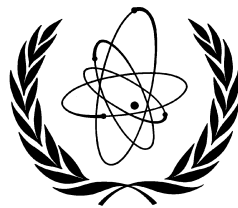
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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, my dear colleagues

I have the pleasure to welcome you here to Vienna for this international experts meeting on reactor and spent fuel safety in the light of the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

This meeting is organised in the frame of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety which was unanimously endorsed by Member States at the 2011 IAEA General Conference. The action relating to communication and information dissemination requests the IAEA Secretariat to “*organize international experts meetings to analyse all relevant technical aspects and learn the lessons from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station accident*”.

This is the first International Experts’ Meeting organised by the Secretariat in response to this request and other IEMs on pertinent topics will follow in due course. This is a common endeavour of all relevant Departments and experts in the Agency.

I would like first to express my sincere appreciation to your Chairman for this meeting Richard Meserve and the two co-chairs Jacques Repussard and Shridhar Chande for accepting the responsibility for providing their sound stewardship for the conduct of this meeting.

I would now like to take the opportunity to briefly reiterate the objectives of the meeting this week:

- To identify and analyse reactor and spent nuclear fuel safety and performance issues;
- To consider the design, engineering and analysis of current and new systems for accident prevention and mitigation;
- To exchange information on national assessments of reactor and spent nuclear fuel safety and performance; and
- To identify potential priority areas for research and development, technology development and management.

Looking around the room today, I am pleased to see that the meeting has attracted a very high level of interest. I understand that around 250 experts have registered to attend, representing 50 Member States along with experts from other relevant organisations. This clearly reflects the importance that the nuclear community worldwide attaches to the process of learning lessons from the Fukushima accident.

It is now just over a year since the accident. Since then, significant progress has been made to strengthen nuclear safety worldwide, and to make nuclear energy safer. For example, many Member States have taken steps to assess the safety vulnerabilities of their nuclear power plants and to introduce necessary improvements. The independence of regulatory bodies has been more than ever recognised as a founding stone of nuclear safety, and some Member States are in the process of answering the weaknesses identified in this field.

While the responsibility for the safety of nuclear installations rests with the individual countries concerned, the IAEA plays a leading role in making nuclear power safer throughout the world. We have already reported the progress in the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan to the Board of Governors and provided briefings to Member States. The development of a methodology for assessing safety vulnerabilities, a systematic review of the IAEA Safety Standards and strengthening of IAEA peer review services are among the key achievements since the adoption of the Action Plan at the September 2011 General Conference.

However there still remains much to be done and if I can echo the words of DG Amano, “*a culture of constant vigilance and improvement is **vital***” and “*complacency **can kill***”.

The challenge for us all this week is therefore to analyse what is known about the Fukushima accident to-date in the specific areas associated with reactor and spent fuel safety. You will have the opportunity to share your expert perspectives on the Fukushima accident with your peers. You will also be able to share your respective national experiences in implementing measures to strengthen nuclear safety in the light of the accident. We need to identify what lessons have been learned up till now and to identify any necessary further actions to extract lessons in the future. The outcomes of this meeting will be widely disseminated and shared with all Member States.

It is important for all, nuclear regulators, plant operators, governments or international organisations, to maintain the momentum gained over the last 12 months in our collective drive to improve nuclear safety around the world.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude, I wish you a productive meeting and I fully expect that you will take advantage of the time you spend together this week to consider and discuss the issues associated with reactor and spent fuel safety in the light of the Fukushima accident and to highlight the lessons learned.