

Information Circular

INFCIRC/756

Date: 12 June 2009

General Distribution
Original: English, Chinese

International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century, Beijing, China, 20-22 April 2009

Concluding Statement by the President of the Conference

The concluding statement by the President of the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century, held in Beijing, China, from 20 to 22 April 2009, is attached hereto for the information of all Member States.



International Ministerial Conference on

Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century

Beijing, April 20 to 22, 2009

Concluding Statement by

the President of the Conference

The International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century was held in Beijing, China, from 20 to 22 April 2009, attended by ministers, high-ranking officials and experts from 61 States and 7 international organizations, with a total of 808 participants and observers. This conference was organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), hosted by the Chinese Government through the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA), and co-sponsored by the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) of OECD and the China Nuclear Energy Association (CNEA). Its aim was to review the status and the prospects of nuclear energy, including the evolution of technology, and offer a forum for many countries considering the potential benefits of adding nuclear power to the energy mix.

A wide range of issues has been covered during the three days' conference, including energy resources and the environment, technology available now and in the future, infrastructure development, reliable fuel supply, spent fuel and waste management. The participants exchanged views on the future role of nuclear energy by presentations, discussions and consultations. There was a broad convergence of views among participants. The goal of the conference has been achieved.

The conference recognized the positive momentum towards nuclear power and the decisions by many developed and developing States to pursue the use of nuclear energy. The Director General of the IAEA reported that more than 60 countries – mostly in the developing world – have informed the IAEA that they might be interested in launching nuclear power programmes. While respecting the right of each State to define its national energy policy in accordance with its international obligations, vast majority of participants affirmed that **nuclear energy, as a proven, clean, safe, competitive technology, will make an increasing contribution to the sustainable development of human kind throughout the 21st century and beyond.** It was widely recognized that:

- Nuclear power contributes to global energy security while addressing climate change and avoiding air pollution;

- Nuclear power is a base-load source of electricity that can make a major contribution to meeting energy needs in a sustainable manner in the 21st century;

- Nuclear energy can make a valuable contribution to worldwide socio-economic development.

Welcoming the opportunity of further development of nuclear power, participants present at this Conference expressed their views on the following aspects:

- The international non-proliferation efforts should be strengthened and States must

comply with their respective non-proliferation obligations, strengthen their export controls and enhance their cooperation with the IAEA to ensure the implementation of their respective IAEA safeguards obligations. International cooperation in these areas should be reinforced.

-The operating nuclear power plants in the world have maintained an excellent safety record. The continuing safe operation of the current fleet of nuclear power reactors is essential for continued confidence in the use of nuclear technology. All States having or developing a nuclear power program should give high priority to ensuring safety. In addition, states should develop and maintain appropriate effective physical protection measures, with due regard to IAEA guidance. To this end, international cooperation and communication on nuclear safety and security should be encouraged.

-Consideration should be given to measures that will help to ensure reliable access to nuclear fuel supply, while maintaining the normal operation of the international nuclear fuel market. The international community should conduct in-depth discussions and thorough analysis of the technical, legal, political and economic aspects of proposals to establish multilateral nuclear fuel cycle mechanisms for reliable access to nuclear fuel cycle services under the auspices of IAEA. The Director General of the IAEA expressed his hope to bring proposals to the June Board.

-The safe management of spent fuel, which for some countries includes reprocessing and recycling, as well as the disposal of radioactive waste are of great importance for the sustainable development of nuclear power. Each State remains responsible for the management of its spent fuel and radioactive waste. The participants encourage international cooperation in these fields. Each State should take appropriate steps to ensure that adequate financial resources are available to support the safety of nuclear installations throughout their life, including during the decommissioning phase, and the safety of the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste.

-Countries developing nuclear power programmes are responsible for the development of the necessary infrastructure. Some countries, including developing countries, may seek assistance and support from countries with existing infrastructures and capability. Support should be given to the developing countries to help them to address their particular needs and responsibilities in the development of necessary infrastructures. Specific support could include, inter alia, helping with how to establish laws and regulatory frameworks, supporting training and the development of the understanding of nuclear technology and the technical options, and facilitating and supporting financing of new nuclear power plants.

-International cooperation should be continually strengthened to carry forward research and development of advanced nuclear technologies. While further enhancing the safety, security and proliferation resistance of nuclear power plants, technology developers should pay due attention to the economic competitiveness of nuclear power in accordance with the needs of both developing and developed countries.

-The Secretary General of OECD and other participants expressed the view that nuclear energy should have an important role to play in post Kyoto flexibility mechanisms.

To conclude, the progress made by the nuclear industry since the 2005 Paris Conference has been significant, as indicated by the number of countries expressing interest in new nuclear plants. The IAEA plays an essential role in assisting States to develop the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The IAEA was encouraged to continue its international cooperation with Member States and international organizations such as the OECD/NEA. In this regard, participants are looking forward to a further conference at the Ministerial level in another four years, which would be a valuable step in the direction of developing the support and assurance by all countries involved in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.