



International Ministerial Conference: "Nuclear Power for the 21st Century"

Paris, 21 and 22 March 2005

Final Statement

The International Conference on Nuclear Power for the 21st Century was held in Paris on 21 and 22 March 2005, attended by Ministers, high-ranking officials and experts from 74 States and 10 international organizations. This Conference was organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in cooperation with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) of the OECD, and was hosted by the French Government. Its aim was to discuss future policies with respect to nuclear power and, in particular, to examine and analyse the potential contribution of this energy source to meeting energy needs of the century while respecting social concerns and expectations.

Many views were expressed and in depth discussions took place during the Conference. There was a broad convergence of views among participants on the following:

- Each State is free to define its national energy policy in accordance with its international obligations;
- The availability of energy and access to it are essential to human development;
- The health of the planet's environment, including action to reduce air pollution and address the risk of global climate change, is a serious concern that must be regarded as a priority by all Governments;
- A diverse portfolio of energy sources will be needed in the 21st century to allow access to sustainable energy and electricity resources in all regions of the world. Efforts will be needed as well to improve energy efficiency, while limiting air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

A wide range of different views were expressed. In this context, a vast majority of participants affirmed that nuclear power can make a major contribution to meeting energy needs and sustaining the world's development in the 21st century, for a large number of both developed and developing countries, taking into account the following:

- Nuclear power does not generate air pollution or greenhouse gas emissions;
- Nuclear power is a proven technology, which under many circumstances provides competitively priced electricity to individuals, companies and the society, in comparison with average energy prices from other sources, thus contributing to the competitiveness of the economy;
- Nuclear power contributes to security of supply and to the stability of energy prices by reducing exposure to fluctuations in the price of fossil materials;

- Nuclear power can also make a valuable contribution through the production of potable water and hydrogen.

However, they recognized that the following conditions are required for nuclear power to thrive:

- States must commit themselves to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which constitute a threat to international peace and security. In order to benefit from cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and related technologies in accordance with international law, States should comply strictly with their commitments and international obligations, including IAEA safeguards, and non proliferation objectives, and apply criteria for physical protection and export control of nuclear material, equipment and technology, according to their respective laws, that conform to international non-proliferation objectives and relevant regimes. Particular vigilance should be exerted with regard to sensitive nuclear material, equipment and technology with proliferation potential (e.g. enrichment, reprocessing), which should not be exported to states that may seek to use them for weapons purposes;

- In order to maintain the highest nuclear safety levels, all States having or developing a nuclear power programme should give due priority to nuclear safety, taking into account the importance of international cooperation for the enhancement of nuclear safety;

- States must make the necessary arrangements to ensure the highest level of security of nuclear material and facilities;

- Solutions exist for the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste. The technical solutions arising from research and development into high-level waste and long-lived low and intermediate level waste, currently under way, should be implemented within the framework of progressive national processes that address the expectations and concerns of citizens. States have an obligation and responsibility to ensure appropriate options are provided for the management and disposition of nuclear fuel and must ensure that using nuclear energy does not create undue burdens or risks for future generations;

- International research and development programmes are currently carried out to develop innovative nuclear systems aiming to provide increased benefits with respect to economy, safety, waste management and non-proliferation. They can and should be oriented according to sustainable development criteria, and provide answers to the needs and concerns of society, taking into account the specific situation of each State.

The IAEA has an essential role to play in facilitating the development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in ensuring compliance with peaceful use undertakings, in assisting States in maintaining high levels of safety and security, in fostering international cooperation and in disseminating to the public information on nuclear energy. The OECD / NEA also plays an important role with respect to nuclear energy by providing objective analysis.

The final statement was prepared for the President of the Conference to reflect a broad convergence of views from the vast majority of participants expressed at the Conference.