

IAEA conference
Vienna, June 20, 2011

Distinguished Ministers,
Director General,

First of all I would like to state, once again, my sincere concern and sympathy with Japans plight. I would also like to congratulate the Japanese administration for the comprehensive report they have submitted to the IAEA.

The nuclear accident in Fukushima has certainly struck the hardest blow at Japan, but the entire planet has been shaken.

Therefore, four months on, we need to draw initial lessons from the event, and to strengthen existing nuclear safety mechanisms at the international level.

In this spirit, I welcome Director General AMANO's initiative in convening this meeting. In preparation for this important event, France has taken several steps in the context of its G8 presidency.

On May 26-27 last, G8 nations agreed on several important issues in the area of nuclear safety.

In particular, they committed to promote the highest standards of safety, develop stress tests for existing nuclear plants and conduct periodic safety reviews in facilities.

As part of the French Presidency of the G8, and also with a view to further assisting in the preparation of today's seminar, I organized an informal ministerial seminar that brought together, on June 7, NEA member countries as well as guest countries. Thirty-three nations participated actively in this meeting to identify specific areas for improvement. The meeting identified lines of consensus, a summary of which was submitted to Mr. AMANO back on June 8th.

Delegations present at the seminar generally agreed with the G8 meetings conclusions and that we must:
Firstly : strengthen international

mechanisms;

Secondly : enhance international cooperation;

And thirdly : improve plant safety and accident management;

1 / As regards the need to update international arrangements, we wish to update international conventions in the wake of the Fukushima accident. The various countries have welcomed the announcement of a special meeting of Parties to the CNS to be held in 2012

2 / In addition, consensus was found on the need to develop international cooperation. Such cooperation is expected to enhance transparency and help develop

a culture of high safety standards.

In particular, a need was felt to reaffirm the IAEA's central role in strengthening nuclear safety worldwide.

3 / Several avenues were identified with a view to enhancing plant safety:

First, conducting "stress tests" on existing nuclear facilities and producing periodic safety reviews of facilities.

Next, one should work to promote the highest standards of safety for new reactors.

There is a need to improve crisis management mechanisms, by ensuring the availability of off-site rescue capacities for each reactor, for example by setting up

emergency intervention teams with nuclear-specific expertise.

Finally, training courses that cover, in particular, crisis management should be conducted at international level, thus making sure that experiences are shared on the broadest basis. Also, we need to further pursue our R&D effort.

I am happy that some of our suggestions have found their way into this conferences ministerial declaration and I certainly hope that others can be further elaborated under the action plan which the IAEA is going to draft as follow-up to this seminar.

The implementation of commitments on nuclear safety depends on the willingness of each state, since nuclear safety is primarily a national responsibility.

France, like all EU countries under the 2009 nuclear safety directive, has pledged to seek a peer review of its national safety framework every ten years.

We will also keep on soliciting missions to review our safety regulatory framework (IRRS) as well as operational safety review (OSART) on a regular basis. At this point, almost all French reactors have been reviewed as part of an OSART mission.

Stress tests of French facilities will give rise to cross-inspections by countries that

share a border with France, as well as to European peer-reviews. This assessment will also be shared with representatives of civil society.

We will support initiatives, including regional efforts to harmonize approaches to emergency management and facilitate cooperation between crisis centers. France, for one, will carry out such harmonization work with neighboring countries. We shall propose that European regulators groups and associations such as WENRA, ENSREG and HERCA carry out such work and make this European expertise available to the international community, through the IAEA.

Also, I would like to highlight the essential role played by nuclear operators in working towards the general improvement of nuclear safety. I am pleased that the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) has announced an ambitious program; we must encourage them to work more closely with the IAEA.

Finally, it is necessary to ensure fair compensations for victims of nuclear accidents, through mechanisms that cover their trans-boundary impacts. As such, France, acting in close consultation with its partners, has expressed the wish to continue working towards universal applicability of a regime that would be

based on the Vienna and Paris Conventions as well as the joint protocol which creates a bridge between both documents.

Thank you for your attention.