

**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SAFETY**

**20-24 June 2011**

**Opening statement by Australia**

Mr Chair

I take this opportunity to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency for calling this timely Conference. I would also like to thank you personally for all your hard work and persistence in preparing for this Conference.

Mr Chair

Our thoughts are with Japan as it continues to work bravely to stabilise the Fukushima power plant.

Mr Chair

It is clear to all of us here today that more can and should be done at the international level to further improve nuclear safety and national, regional and international emergency preparedness and response to nuclear accidents. The events at Fukushima provide renewed impetus for our efforts.

We are fortunate to have the institutional foundation we require to improve nuclear safety internationally: the IAEA. In order to prevent a proliferation of initiatives on international nuclear safety, our global efforts to strengthen nuclear safety must ensure that we use this institutional foundation. This year and next will see a number of high level meetings on nuclear safety. We expect these events to complement and reinforce each other.

Australia would like to put forward some suggestions for strengthening the role of the IAEA in regard to nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response internationally. These could be considered over the course of this Conference, and incorporated into the action plan, that I understand will be developed with a view to endorsement by the General Conference this year.

Mr Chair

Independent fact-finding and review missions into nuclear incidents at level three and above of the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale would facilitate shared learning, enhance transparency and provide a strong basis for improved risk mitigation strategies.

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Regular safety review missions by the IAEA to member states that are more sharply focussed and tailored to the particular circumstances of the receiving state than current review missions would do much to and boost public confidence in the safety of nuclear power plants.

And reporting by States Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety on compliance with IAEA safety standards would further boost confidence in nuclear safety internationally.

Mr Chair

Fukushima has reminded us that although there have been significant improvements over the past 25 years in the safety of the technology and in safety culture, nuclear accidents can still have major safety consequences. As such, all states should be prepared to respond to them quickly and effectively, at the national and international levels.

Strengthening the role of the IAEA in emergency preparedness and response, including by promoting and enhancing existing IAEA global and regional capabilities in this field, will help ensure that, to the extent practicable, the consequences of any future accident are reduced.

Mr Chair

Many speakers have noted that nuclear accidents do not recognise national boundaries. In this context, Australia welcomed the approval by the Board of Governors of the RCA-proposed, technical cooperation project on the possible impact of radioactive releases from Fukushima on the marine environment in the Asia-Pacific region. I am pleased to announce that Australia has transferred \$100,000 to the IAEA to be used to help implement this important project,

Mr Chair

Australia supports the ministerial declaration you have worked so hard to prepare and was pleased to join in adopting that declaration at the close of yesterday's session. Australia looks forward to the consideration by the Board of Governors and the General Conference of the draft Action Plan to be prepared by the Secretariat. Thank you Mr Chair