



**IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety
Vienna, 20 June 2011**

**Statement by
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Dear Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A little bit more than 3 months ago, Japan was hit by one of the worst natural disasters in its history, that killed or made disappear approximately 25 000 people. I want to pass again my deep condolences to the Government of Japan for these tragic losses.

A part of this wide disaster has been the accident in Fukushima Dai-ichi which, despite having caused no direct fatalities at this stage, has brought about a large release of radioactive material in the environment, a cause for major concerns in Japan and beyond.

The local workers are still struggling to cool the reactors, to prevent further release and to treat accumulated radioactive waters. Let me pay a tribute to the courageous teams who have managed and are managing the situation in dire conditions.

As ever with nuclear energy, the accident is local but the impact is global. The international community has started to respond and to organise a common approach. The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) is determined to take its share in these efforts.

Firstly, the NEA has co-organised at the OECD Headquarters in Paris with the G8 and its Chair, France, two days of meetings, on 7 June at ministerial level and on 8 June, for Heads of nuclear safety authorities. 33 countries participated, including all G8 Countries, most of NEA Member Countries as well as Brazil, Bulgaria, India, Romania, South Africa and Ukraine.

These two days focused on the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident and meant to contribute to the present IAEA ministerial meeting, were complementary and proved very synergetic. On 7 June, The French Minister for Ecology Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, chaired excellently the ministerial seminar and she has already explained what Ministers agreed upon, which include a very significant set of actions to strengthen nuclear safety worldwide.

Let me concentrate on the outcomes of the Forum of Heads of Regulators held on 8 June.

Heads of Nuclear Safety Authorities agreed to continue to secure the highest levels of safety through continuous improvement of safety, in line with the conclusions of the G8 Summit in Deauville of last May and the ministerial seminar on 7 June.

The Forum participants invited all regulatory authorities responsible for nuclear facilities around the world to launch "stress tests" or comprehensive safety and risk reviews and analyses as soon as possible. Regulatory authorities will continue to systematically advance the necessary knowledge needed for all plant designs and post-accident situations. Priority areas include extreme external natural events and resilience to external shocks, including combined risks, plant design and the ability of safety systems to withstand severe accidents, emergency response and management capabilities, crisis communication, and site recovery plans and their implementation.

They agreed to reflect upon the adequacy and challenges of the tools currently being used to communicate openly and transparently with the public on accident severity, including the INES scale, a common tool defined by the IAEA and the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency.

Regulatory authorities stressed that the prime responsibility for nuclear safety rests with licensed operators. In this regard, they welcomed the commitments of the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) and its members to increase their efforts on nuclear safety through enhanced peer reviews, transparency and international co-operation among operators.

Dear Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, these two meetings have been key milestones in the NEA activities over the past months to address the consequences of the Fukushima accident; they also clearly define the main lines of the Agency's work in the coming months.

Hence, the NEA has put the consequences of the Fukushima accident at the top of the agenda of all its technical committees in charge of nuclear safety, radiation protection, nuclear science, nuclear law and economics. The NEA will support the IAEA in its effort to strengthen the Nuclear Safety Convention and the Safety Standards. The NEA will assist in the integration of the requirements made

necessary by the accident in the framework of the MDEP initiative; the MDEP helps nuclear safety authorities converge in their safety reviews of new reactor designs.

Responding to the request of the G8, the NEA Member Countries and associated countries, the Agency is ready to fully assess the conditions having presided over the accident with a report in the next six to nine months time offering a first comprehensive picture of what happened and the lessons that we collectively draw from the accident.

Similarly, we will review the relevance of the INES scale, as different opinions were voiced on the severity of the accident, leading to some misunderstandings in the media and the public.

Finally, I visited Japan a few weeks ago and offered the NEA assistance to the Authorities, specifically to help in the safety review of their operating nuclear fleet. I also proposed our expertise in the decision-making process regarding radiation protection measures, to help these decisions be fully in line with the best international practice so they could be understood and accepted by the population. I proposed as well to assist Japan in assessing the final rating of the accident with the INES scale.

The offer to help in the safety assessment of the operating reactors has been accepted by the Government of Japan and a first NEA team went three weeks ago to Tokyo to plan a first set of actions.

Dear Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me share with you the main conclusion that Ministers and Head of Nuclear Safety Authorities expressed in Paris on 7 and 8 June, consisting in a firm commitment to continue striving for the highest level of nuclear safety and for the reinforcement of the safety activities of the IAEA and the OECD/NEA. Although very unfortunate, the Fukushima Dai-ichi will in time further strengthen nuclear safety internationally. This IAEA Ministerial conference is the next important step of many that will contribute to this objective.