



S W E D E N

STATEMENT

by

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STATEMENT BY SWEDEN

Mr. President, Ministers, Ladies & Gentlemen

Sweden warmly welcomes the Director General's prompt initiative to organise this IAEA ministerial conference on nuclear safety, giving us the opportunity to review and assess our individual and joint efforts to ensure the highest possible safety standards and effective emergency response mechanisms.

It is important to point out the systematic safety work continuously carried out nationally and within international organizations. At the same time we must show that we are ready to strengthen nuclear safety even further if exceptional events reveal risks not foreseen.

Mr. President,

Sweden is convinced that it is most important to take actions on safety upgrades as soon as possible even if it will, in all likelihood, take years to fully analyse the accident in Japan and identify all the lessons to be learned.

Strengthened requirements of the Swedish regulator on existing power plants has led to the most intensive period of the Swedish nuclear industry since the construction years during the 1970s and 1980s. Extensive safety modernisations of the nuclear power plants are made to improve the plants' resistance to malfunctions and incidents. This applies both to events that can occur in the plants and to external events. Along with the comprehensive modernization program the power industries are also planning for power up-rates in 8 of the 10 nuclear power plants. The planned power up-rates will add some 1200 MW in electrical power. Many plant modification measures have been implemented but there is a lot more planned in the coming years. Experience shows that it took more time to prepare and implement plant modifications than originally planned due to lack of human resources and late manufacture of plant components. The regulator faces major challenges to supervise that plant modifications and changes in operation conditions are made in a safe manner.

Mr. President,

Following the decision by the European Council to review the safety of all European nuclear plants on the basis of a comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessment, the so called stress tests, the Swedish Government has assigned the Swedish regulator the task to report on the outcome of these stress tests before the end of this year. The regulator shall also report on which necessary measures that the regulator will impose on the operators. The scope of the Swedish program has been extended to also include spent fuel storage facilities.

The Swedish regulator decided in May that the licensees of the nuclear power plants and the Swedish interim storage for spent nuclear fuel, shall re-evaluate their safety analyses for their facilities regarding station black-outs, loss-of-cooling etc. as a result of severe weather conditions or other natural phenomena. The results of analyses and safety evaluations shall, together with identified safety measures be reported to the regulator before October 31, 2011.

Mr. President,

Sweden strongly supports the International Regulatory Review Service of the Agency and will continue to provide experts to the IRRS mission teams.

The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority is the national competent authority in radiation protection, emergency preparedness and response, safety, security and non-proliferation matters in Sweden. Integrity, transparency and trustworthiness are attributes that characterize the authority's operations. The authority has requested a full-scope IRRS review of its activities (excluding interfaces with security matters) in February 2012. Sweden looks forward to the planned review, the preceding self-evaluation and will unquestionably benefit from the regulatory experience and expertise of the international review team members.

Sweden has a long experience in implementing nuclear safety and believes in strong commitments to safety through continuous improvements.

The self-assessment and bench-marking offered by the processes set up under the "Convention on Nuclear Safety" and the "Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management" have proven to be invaluable in raising national awareness. Although the effects of a nuclear accident do not stop at borders between countries, the responsibility for nuclear safety is primarily national. A strong and independent safety authority is of utmost importance. In the light of this and the previously mentioned support to international peer review systems we find arguments that would support a review of the international safety regimes.

Mr. President,

Sweden has been an active partner in the work within the Agency on the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies.

Sweden is convinced that the actions and recommendations arising from this Action Plan would improve and strengthen the international emergency preparedness and response system and should be considered for implementation. This Action Plan is a completed work containing several solutions ready to be applied to the international emergency preparedness and response system. Implementation of this Action Plan would demonstrate a dynamic approach to taking action as soon as possible after the accident in Japan in March 2011.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

The Swedish Government has initiated a thorough review of its legislation within the field of radiation protection, nuclear safety and security. The possibilities of merging the provisions of the Swedish Nuclear Activities Act and the Swedish Radiation Protection Act into one enactment will be especially considered.

Thank you!