

Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety

15-17 December 2012

Australia - Opening Statement

Mr Co-Presidents, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

Australia thanks the Government of Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency for taking the initiative, not only to hold this Conference, but to locate it here in the Fukushima Prefecture. For a few days we will be neighbours with the communities whose lives were severely affected by the earthquake, tsunami and the nuclear accident at Fukushima Dai-Ichi. Our thoughts continue to be with these communities and, indeed, all of the Japanese people.

Australia acknowledges the substantial efforts taken by Japan to address the causes of the accident, including the several frank and thorough inquiries and the identification of steps to be taken to strengthen nuclear safety. We appreciate Japan's efforts to reorganise its institutional framework for nuclear safety, including the recent changes to nuclear safety legislation and the establishment of the Nuclear Regulation Authority. This will assist in post-accident evaluation of institutional factors contributing to the accident and the efficiency and effectiveness of response measures. We look forward to assisting, and learning from, Japan as legislative, regulatory and governmental approaches are developed and implemented to address such institutional factors.

Australia notes, with appreciation, the sharing of lessons learned from the decommissioning of the reactors at Fukushima Dai-ichi and the remediation of on-site and off-site contamination. We firmly believe that Japan's approach to, and engagement on these issues, can only enhance the safety and effectiveness of future decommissioning and remediation activities worldwide.

Mr Co-Presidents

The Fukushima nuclear accident focused international attention on nuclear safety. We welcome Director General Amano's ongoing actions and initiatives aimed at improving international nuclear safety, including progress and implementation of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

Australia reaffirms the importance it attaches to the universal adherence to, and effective implementation of, the IAEA Safety Standards by Member States. Furthermore, implementation of Safety Requirements needs to be reported under the Convention on Nuclear Safety and other relevant international instruments, and as part of participation in Peer Review missions. We believe that effective worldwide implementation is some way off and those countries incorporating Safety Standards as part of their legal and governmental framework should closely examine and be able to verify in a factual manner the effective implementation of IAEA Safety Requirements as a common minimum.

To support the broad and effective implementation of the Safety Requirements, we strongly encourage the hosting of IAEA peer review services by Member States.

With the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety now in its second year, it remains vitally important to continue timely and effective implementation of the actions agreed. Many more lessons remain to be learned as a result of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear accident to ensure the global nuclear safety regime is robust as possible, and the Action Plan remains central to this process.

We note the positive progress being made to strengthen international emergency response, including the registration of several additional national response capabilities by Member States in RANET since March 2011. In improving emergency response, we stress the importance of implementing the strategy in the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International

Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies in conjunction with the APNS.

Australia acknowledges and supports the outcomes of the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety held earlier this year in Vienna. Australia submitted a proposal to enhance the Convention's peer review process through more evidence-based reporting on implementation of Safety Requirements. We were pleased that the proposal was adopted. The meeting also agreed to an amendment of the Convention's rules to require the IAEA to prepare a generic observations report taking into account the outcomes of IRRS and other types of missions. We feel that such a report will have a very positive and productive effect on global nuclear safety.

Finally, Mr Co-Presidents, we welcome Director-General Amano's announcement that the IAEA will, supported by Member States, prepare a comprehensive report on the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident including consideration of radiological consequences, decommissioning, remediation and waste management.

Australia looks forward to supporting the IAEA in preparing the report.

Thank you Mr Co-Presidents