

**AUSTRIAN WORKING PAPER**  
**IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, 20-24 June 2011 in Vienna**

**BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

The nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima, Japan, has clearly shown that safety continues to be one of the most defining issues regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy. 25 years after Chernobyl, the Fukushima catastrophe is being ranked highest on the International Nuclear Event Scale. In this context, Austria strongly supports the initiative taken by IAEA Director General Amano in convening a ministerial conference to provide an initial assessment of the Fukushima catastrophe, its impact and consequences, consider the lessons that need to be learned, launch the process of strengthening nuclear safety and strengthen the response to nuclear accidents and emergencies in the field of nuclear safety in the near future.

The conference is hence an ideal opportunity to take stock of the underlying causes of the Fukushima nuclear accident, to express concerns related to nuclear safety worldwide and to identify measures to be taken accordingly. In particular, this should include:

- A clear-cut and strong statement by the conference that IAEA Member States stand ready to address all pertinent questions with a view to strengthen nuclear safety and emergency preparedness, as well as a commitment to take immediate measures according to lessons learnt, which will allow for a preliminary response to the Fukushima accident;
- Strengthening nuclear safety provisions and specifications, fully drawing on lessons learnt from the Fukushima accident as well as from the results of a comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessment ("stress test") performed by European Union Member States and other IAEA Member States;
- Strengthening the role of the IAEA in the field of nuclear safety. This should include verification of national nuclear safety regimes and on-site access in cases of concern on the basis of random selection of nuclear power installations;
- Strengthening the role of the IAEA in international coordination and cooperation in cases of emergency, with a view to ensure immediate and optimal information for the Agency and its Member States, as well as increased transparency with regard to nuclear incidents and accidents;
- Readiness to endorse pertinent amendment proposals at the extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties foreseen for August 2012 in order to strengthen the Convention on Nuclear Safety;
- Strengthening transparency and engaging the general public regarding information on risks related to nuclear power plants in operation and, against this background, launching of a process of increased civil protection preparedness against nuclear accidents at a global level;
- Strengthening nuclear safety and security in all aspects pertaining to nuclear installations. This should include the identification of best practices as regards a wider

application of nuclear expertise in view of changing political situations and potential natural disasters;

- Strengthening the IAEA Nuclear Safety Convention, inter alia, through the implementation of binding IAEA safety standards, a strengthened role of the IAEA under the Convention and other relevant legal instruments. Moreover, this should include looking into innovative onsite control schemes as regards nuclear safety, as well as by ensuring adequate resources for the IAEA Secretariat (PBC);
- Gradually enhancing the role of the IAEA concerning the safe and secure management of facilities in the nuclear fuel cycle, which should be brought under IAEA control along the lines described in the Austrian proposal for the multilateralisation of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (INFCIRC/755).

### **CONDUCT AND OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE**

Addressing nuclear safety at ministerial level should allow achieving the necessary political commitment for taking decisive action at a global level. As referred to above, such commitment should be as precise as possible, and thus provide for concrete actions to promote nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response. Moreover, IAEA Member States should commit themselves to review the safety of all nuclear plants in operation on the basis of comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessment instruments. As it is imperative to ensure nuclear safety across borders, such safety reviews should be carried worldwide, regarding both existing and planned nuclear installations, in cooperation with the relevant international organisations. Responsible steps need to be taken in cases of negative results such as shut-down or safety overhaul of installations.

Discussions at expert level at the Ministerial Conference should be open to representatives of the nuclear industry, civil society representatives and representatives of other interested international organisation alike. In particular, the invitation of participants from NGOs, universities, international organizations, nuclear safety authorities, regulators, suppliers, operators, and representatives from media would allow for a broad discussion among all relevant stakeholders. Based upon a thorough evaluation and analysis of the situation, elements of concrete proposals should be elaborated at expert level jointly with the IAEA Secretariat and IAEA Member States

### **IDEAS FOR FOLLOW- UP**

The following elements could serve as a basis for deliberations at the conference and beyond:

- Endorsement of comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments ("stress test") concerning nuclear power plants.
- Improvement of peer-review mechanisms, in particular procedures ensuring independent scientific and technical advice for both regulatory authorities and operators;
- Endorsement of a strengthened role of the IAEA under the Convention on Nuclear Safety and other relevant instruments regarding nuclear safety, and subject to availability of resources, strengthening the pertinent organisational units in the Agency

- Promotion of ratification of legal instruments, in particular of all relevant international Conventions (“The Family of Safety Conventions”); improving the effective implementation of the Nuclear Safety Convention, among others through enhanced participation of Contracting Parties in the review process by ensuring timely submission of comprehensive national reports and their follow-up;
- Firmly and duly considering the possibility of IAEA onsite controls of nuclear power plants in cases of concern as well as on the basis of random selection;
- Underlining the importance of and the need for a “cradle to grave”- approach regarding the safety of nuclear power installations, including uranium mining and milling and their legacies, all operational and shut down activities as well as waste management and ultimate dismantlement activities;
- Strengthening the mechanisms under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency by foreseeing, in particular, standardised obligatory reporting in cases of emergency. Ensuring timely, precise and independently verified and verifiable technical and scientific information, and allowing for immediate onsite presence of IAEA representatives in case of major emergencies (standardised access agreements) via rapid reaction capabilities. Elaborating and strengthening existing civil protection capabilities and regional cooperation schemes for managing nuclear emergency situations. Strengthening international cooperation and harmonization concerning “soft counter-measures” such as travelling recommendations, recommendations for foreigners in countries affected by a nuclear accident, including personnel of embassies, and monitoring of airline passengers and imported commercial goods, and other measures.