

Royaume du Maroc

Ministère de l'Energie, des Mines, de l'Eau et de l'Environnement
Département de l'Energie et des Mines



المملكة المغربية

وزارة الطاقة والمعادن والماء والبيئة
قطاع الطاقة والمعادن

**Third
International Conference on Research Reactors: Safe Management and
Effective Utilization**

**OPENING Address
By
DR Amina BENKHADRA
Minister of Energy, Mine, Water and Environment.**

**14 to 18 November 2011
Rabat – Morocco**

**Dr DAOUD Mohamad, IAEA Deputy Director General,
Mister Khalid EL MEDIOURI, Director General of CNESTEN,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am very pleased to welcome you in Rabat for the third International Conference on Research Reactors dedicated to the important theme of Safe Management and Effective Utilization.

This conference is organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency and hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco through the National Centre for Nuclear Energy, Sciences and Technology (CNESTEN).

This conference is one of the important events gathering professionals and experts from the entire world to exchange scientific and technical information, knowledge and feed back experience on research reactors. There is no doubt that the presentations and discussions to be held during this week will be helpful both for the international research reactor community and for IAEA to better adjust its policy and programs on the subject.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Significant issues still being faced by the research reactor community are primarily related to the operation, utilization, safety, ageing, decommissioning and waste management. More recently, challenges such as initiatives for creating new RR facilities, securing isotope production, human resources, infrastructure capacity building, or sustainability of RR programmes, are receiving greater attention.

This conference will focus on new developments in the relevant, efficient and safe utilisation of Nuclear Research Reactors for the countries' social and economic development. It will contribute to foster the exchange of information on current and new research reactors and to provide a forum for reactor users, operators, managers, regulators, designers and suppliers to share experience and exchange opinions.

It constitutes an opportunity to discuss common challenges, options and strategies and to strengthen regional and international cooperation between Research Reactors' centres from developed and developing countries with special emphasis on the transfer of knowledge and know how.

In this particular context, the International Atomic Energy Agency is a central partner, playing a major role in strengthening the operation, applications and safety of Nuclear Research Reactors, thus supporting the development of civil and peaceful nuclear technologies worldwide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to announce that this conference coincides with the successful commissioning of the Moroccan 2 MW Research Reactor thus initiating a new era for Morocco in the peaceful uses and application of nuclear technology development. We are ambitious and are striving to make our nuclear research centre a cooperative regional and international Centre of Excellence opened to scientists from Africa, the Middle East and other regions within the framework of international cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international partners.

Fukushima accident showed the huge impact a serious nuclear accident can have on nuclear power programmes development and the public confidence.

Morocco has been working for many years for a better adherence to the international regime governing the use and operation of nuclear reactors. I am pleased to announce today the main achievements related to this important issue:

- The draft law governing the safety, security and safeguards of nuclear facilities and activities and other radiological activities and establishing a new, independent and competent safety authority has been adopted by the government this year and is being discussed by the parliament. The establishment of a new, independent and competent safety authority will be implemented once the draft law promulgated, with the support of the European Commission.
- The code of conduct on the safety of research reactors has been signed by Morocco. Given the importance of this document, Morocco has been active in supporting IAEA efforts to promote the application of the code at the regional level and is improving its application at the national level.
- Morocco has ratified the additional protocol to safeguards agreement, which entered into force few months ago.

- The convention on physical protection is under ratification by the parliament.
- Morocco is giving also great attention to the synergy between safety and security, especially for nuclear facilities, such as the research reactor. He is also actively involved in important international initiatives dealing with these subjects, such as the Nuclear Security Summit and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like also to express my thanks to all of you for your participation to the conference, your contribution to the conference program, presentations and discussions. I would like also to express my thanks to those who have made this conference possible through their contribution, dedication and effort.

Our special thanks go to Dr Daud Mohamad, IAEA Deputy Director General, of Nuclear Sciences and Applications Department and to the IAEA, Conference Scientific Secretariat staff.

You have a few busy days ahead of you. I wish you a successful and rewarding conference and a nice stay in Morocco.