

**AUSTRALIA**

**IAEA Board of Governors Meeting
2-6 March 2015**

**Agenda Item 3**

***Strengthening the Agency’s Activities Related to Nuclear, Radiation, Transport and Waste Safety***

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Australia welcomes the Director General’s report *Nuclear Safety Review 2015* (GOV/2015/9) outlining the trends, issues and challenges in nuclear safety and the Agency’s efforts to strengthen the global framework in this regard over the last year. We also welcome the six *Draft Safety Requirements* submitted to the Board for approval as Agency safety standards. We thank the Secretariat for the technical briefing it hosted on 17 February, and Deputy Director General Flory for his introductory remarks to this agenda item.

Madam Chair,

The past twelve months have provided the international community with an opportunity to reflect on the implementation of nuclear safety following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, with two key meetings of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). The Sixth Review Meeting of the CNS held here in Vienna last March continued the process of rigorous examination of the actions taken by national authorities and the industry following the accident. Australia noted with satisfaction the efforts reported by many Contracting Parties to re-assess their nuclear installations for vulnerabilities, and the subsequent actions taken to address identified issues.

In addition to the examination of actions taken by Contracting Parties, the Review Meeting also considered the merits of the Convention itself, deciding to convene an historic Diplomatic Conference to consider a Swiss proposal to amend Article 18 of Convention. Ultimately the Conference held last month adopted the *Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety* to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in regard to accident prevent and mitigation. Australia considers this consensus outcome highly important as it clarified expectations on Contracting Parties, while maintaining the integrity of the Convention. Although we do not have nuclear power plants, Australia will continue its practice of fully reporting on the regulation and operation of our research reactor and report on our implementation of the *Vienna Declaration* at the Seventh Review Meeting and beyond. We encourage all Contracting Parties to do the same, and fully participate in the Convention peer review process.

Madam Chair,

Australia notes with interest this year’s *Review* findings on research reactor safety. Having had an active research reactor program for over 60 years, this is a topic of great importance to Australia. Therefore, some of the conclusions drawn by the *Review* are of particular concern. Similar to last year, the *Review* notes that “in view of the feedback from the Fukushima Daiichi accident, appropriate attention needs to be given to ensuring the ability of research reactor operating organisations to perform safety reassessments”. Australia strongly agrees that research reactors should also be subject to post-Fukushima safety reviews. We conducted such a review in 2011 for our OPAL research reactor, and we strongly urge Member States operating similar reactors which may have not yet done so, to perform such reviews as a matter of priority.

The *Review* also again highlights the challenges faced by an ageing research reactor fleet.Australia continues to see ageing management of these reactors as a high priority, both to ensure nuclear safety and sustainability of the global supply chain for medical radioisotopes. We encourage all Member States operating ageing research reactors to ensure that they have appropriate and sufficient monitoring oversight, maintenance programs, and resources to provide for their safe and reliable operation over the long term. As an active participant in the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency High-Level Group on the Security of Supply of Medical Radioisotopes, we also encourage Member States to ensure that, for those reactors used in the production of radiopharmaceuticals for the commercial market, ageing management is conducted in accordance with the principles of full-cost recovery, outage reserve capacity and minimisation of the use of highly-enriched uranium.

Madam Chair,

Our delegation notes that the *Review* again highlights the safety risk posed by disused radioactive sources at the end of their useful life. To this end we are pleased that the Agency organised an open-ended meeting in October 2014 to discuss the development of guidance for implementing the provisions of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources in relation to the long term management of disused sources. We look forward to the continued development of this guidance as recommended in the Chair’s report.

Our delegation notes the *Review’s* discussion of the activities of INLEX. In that regard, we welcome the fact that the Convention on Supplementary Compensation will finally enter into force in April this year. We look forward to wider adherence to the modernised conventions on nuclear liability in the years to come.

Madam Chair,

Turning to the six *Draft Safety Requirements* before the Board, Australia is pleased to see that post-Fukushima reviews of the IAEA Safety Standards are producing updated international guidance on important areas such as regulation, nuclear power plant siting, design and operation, safety assessment, and emergency response. Accordingly, we are pleased to support these draft requirements being published as IAEA safety standards. We note the letter from the Chair of the Commission on Safety Standards to the Director General in January 2014 stressing that “greater attention needs to be paid to the implementation of IAEA safety standards by and in Member States”. Australia has long advocated that implementation of IAEA Safety Standards needs to be improved. We encourage all Member States to take the revision of these six documents as an opportunity to renew their commitment to implementing all of the IAEA Safety Standards relevant to their national programmes.

With these comments, the Australian delegation takes note of document GOV/2015/9, and recommends the six draft Safety Requirements be established as IAEA safety standards.

Thank you Madam Chair.