

Statement from the March 2008 Meeting of the International Nuclear Regulations Association of Chief Nuclear Safety Regulators¹

INRA members recognise the increased interest of many countries across the world, including significant numbers of non-nuclear nations, in developing new nuclear programmes (e.g., power reactors, research reactors) or in expanding their existing programmes.

We consider that in this context the peaceful use of nuclear energy has to be based upon continuously striving to promote and achieve high levels of nuclear safety worldwide. This is achieved notably by the enhancement of international cooperation and a commitment of all nuclear nations, both existing and future, to continuous improvement in nuclear safety and adherence to the obligations of relevant nuclear conventions.

We are mindful of the April 2008 Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and consider in light of this meeting, and in view of recent developments, a need for all countries to reaffirm their commitment:

- to have a legislative and regulatory framework to govern the safety of nuclear materials and installations that meets the requirements of the Convention and that meets relevant Fundamental Safety Principles, and appropriate Standards;
- in particular, to establish an independent nuclear safety regulatory body with authority, competence, financial and human resources to fulfill its responsibilities to secure a high level of safety;

¹ INRA members represented at the March 2008 meeting were from Canada, France, Japan, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, UK and USA. Germany was not represented but has approved this statement.

- to ensure that such an independent regulatory body is able to come to its regulatory judgments or decisions on nuclear safety issues based on expert nuclear safety technical understanding unfettered by outside interest or pressure, and that this is underpinned by an appropriate legal framework, custom and practice and through other measures established by governments and parliaments;
- to anchor an effective system of nuclear safety regulation and control on a strong national commitment to develop cultures in all relevant organisations, bodies, that emphasize nuclear safety as the priority”.

We therefore call on all countries, including those considering the development of a nuclear energy programme (or programme involving research reactors), to give due consideration to the needs for the establishment and maintenance of an independent regulatory authority, an adequate safety culture in relevant organisations, bodies, and the associated timescale necessary to develop a comprehensive national nuclear safety infrastructure.

In support of these views, we reaffirm our willingness to assist countries in developing legislative and regulatory entities and international institutions, with the aim of enhancing nuclear safety worldwide.

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