

## SECOND MDEP CONFERENCE ON NEW REACTOR DESIGN ACTIVITIES

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

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Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the Second Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) Conference on New Reactor Design Activities.

With the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident, the Conference comes in a challenging time for all of us, national regulators, reactor vendors, licensees, and others in the nuclear field. My primary thoughts go to our Japanese colleagues to whom I wish to express our solidarity in their recovery from the devastating earthquake and Tsunami that occurred on the 11th of March and the subsequent nuclear accident.

We will devote some of our time during the next two days on the accident which has impacted the work of all of our organisations. This includes obviously the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency; all the programmes of work of its Committees are being amended to draw the lessons from it. The next NEA Steering Committee policy debate on 27 October will be focused on the accident as it is the highest topic on the agenda of the international nuclear community and will probably remain so in the coming years.

The Fukushima Dai-ichi accident has once again illustrated the global character of the nuclear sector. The need for a global nuclear safety has clearly emerged from this event, with implications in terms of harmonisation of approaches and practices; it has become a broad demand from the Public and the Governments,

as expressed at the G8-NEA Ministerial Seminar and Forum of Regulators that we organised with the French Government on 7 and 8 June.

This also came out clearly from the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Fukushima on 24 June and we expect an action plan to be presented very soon on the occasion of the IAEA General Conference held next week in Vienna.

The question is as always: how to proceed, given the technicality of nuclear rules and regulations, the various technologies, the responsibility of national authorities? How to go beyond basic standards, which are necessary but, as their names indicate, remain basic? I trust the MDEP is a case in point in terms of methodology and it is also why it increasingly attracts new country regulatory bodies, willing to participate.

For the last four years, the MDEP has gathered the main regulators concerned with licensing new reactors, from Canada, China, Finland, France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They have continued to work diligently on this multinational initiative, on concrete reactors construction projects with the experts in their field.

The MDEP has contributed to improve the existing significant and lasting relationships between national regulators. Since the last MDEP Conference two years ago, much progress has been made by the design-specific and issue-specific working groups of the MDEP. This Conference is an opportunity to communicate about this, the products associated with cooperation on new reactor safety reviews and exploring the potential next steps in the harmonisation of regulatory requirements and practices.

The work to date already includes input from industry standards development organizations such as IEC, AFCEN, ASME, JSME and KEPIC, reactor vendors including Westinghouse and Areva, licensees worldwide, IAEA and WENRA, and other industry groups such as WNA and WANO. Industry representatives will share with us the efforts that they are undertaking to encourage standardisation.

Finally, let me stress that the NEA, acting as technical secretariat of the MDEP, give a high priority to its work in this area and would like to thank its members for their continued trust. The MDEP is really within the scope of the Agency's objectives and missions, assisting its member countries in pooling their technical expertise.

In fact, at the origin of the MDEP, the size of nuclear programmes worldwide, today with 65 reactors under construction, as well as the limited industry and regulatory resources were strong drivers for national regulators to pool their resources, to be more efficient. We don't know yet the impact of the Fukushima accident in new build, but to achieve harmonisation of designs and to arrive to an efficient design licensing process, will certainly help to face the new challenges ahead.

I believe your contributions in the MDEP Conference will be keys in improving the efficiency of the new reactor safety evaluation processes and the strategy of the MDEP in this regard. I also hope you will take all the possible benefit of this Conference and I wish you a good work.

I would like now to welcome Mr. André-Claude Lacoste, President of the French Nuclear Safety Authority and Chairman of the MDEP Policy Group. He has

been at the outset of the MDEP initiative and he has provided excellent guidance and forethought to the MDEP organisation over the years. I leave the floor to him.

Thank you for your attention.