

## Message from the Director-General

In 2008, the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of international co-operation in the field of nuclear energy. We have all come a very long way since Fermi's reactor. The number of countries using nuclear power has increased significantly, from a very restricted handful in the 1950s to 30 countries at present, and new entrants in perspective. The industry has evolved, grown and benefited from decades of experience. The NEA has accompanied this evolution in the nuclear sector every step of the way, helping its member countries to ensure the safe, economical and environmentally friendly use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The contribution of the NEA to international co-operation and research in the field and the considerable value of its work to member countries were clearly reflected at the NEA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary High-level Session organised in October 2008. Over 350 policy makers and nuclear energy specialists attended the high-level session chaired by the OECD Secretary-General, Mr. Ángel Gurría, and co-chaired by Mr. Richard J.K. Stratford, Chair of the OECD Steering Committee for Nuclear Energy. Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and IAEA Director-General, was the keynote speaker. Ministers and other high-level officials emphasized the essential role played by the Agency over the years and praised the professionalism and high quality of its work (a selection of the views expressed can be found on pages 10-11). In summary, member countries have come to know that they can count on the NEA to provide independent, leading-edge analyses in the most cost-effective way, providing substantial added value for the investments made.

On the eve of what is set to become a major renewal of nuclear energy development, the role of the NEA is all the more crucial. According to the projections made in the Agency's first-ever *Nuclear Energy Outlook*, largely corroborated by estimates from other major sources, the world's fleet of nuclear power reactors will expand by as little as 55% and as much as 375% between now and 2050. In the context of such an expansion, but also increasing concerns about climate change, security of supply and the costs of energy supply, in markets facing increasing competition and pressure for resources, the work of the Nuclear Energy Agency is key. It offers a forum for member countries to pool their resources and to obtain the best economic, scientific and legal analyses in support of their energy policy decision making. It also fosters the sharing of best practice and experience so that nuclear facilities around the world are among the safest and least polluting energy solutions available for base-load electricity production at affordable prices.

The NEA is proud to have provided valuable service to its member countries for the past 50 years, and looks forward to continuing to do so in the very dynamic environment of the years ahead.



**Luis E. Echávarri**  
NEA Director-General

