

Message from the Director-General

2009 was a very busy year for the NEA, following on from the success of its 50th anniversary and the launching of the *Nuclear Energy Outlook* in late 2008. As the renewed interest in nuclear energy continued to grow, the Agency actively supported international co-operation and initiatives addressing the challenges and benefits of nuclear energy. A few of these merit highlighting.

In the face of potential disruptions to the supply of medical radioisotopes, critical to the health of millions around the world, on very short notice the NEA was successful in bringing together over 80 experts from 13 OECD countries and 3 non-OECD countries to address present and future challenges to reliability of supply. With the government of Canada playing a key role, steps were taken to create an NEA High-level Group on the Security of Supply of Medical Radioisotopes which is working in close co-operation with international organisations, governments, policy and regulatory officials, specialists in nuclear medicine, health industry professionals and nuclear research reactor operators. The group's efforts have already contributed to help improve the supply situation and international coordination.

The Agency also contributed to the success of the second IAEA International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century hosted by the Chinese government in Beijing. The OECD Secretary-General, Mr. Angel Gurría, delivered a keynote speech at the opening session, stressing in particular the contribution of nuclear energy to the security of energy supply and to the abatement of CO₂ emissions.

The NEA is in charge of the Technical Secretariat of the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP), a unique international initiative aiming at enhancing co-operation on safety design reviews of new reactors and identifying opportunities for possible harmonisation and convergence on safety licensing review practices and requirements. The MDEP gained momentum and public recognition in 2009 with the success of the first MDEP conference, organised by the NEA at the OECD Conference Centre in order to share the first outcomes of this project among regulators, vendors, operators and standardisation organisations.

The NEA also runs the Technical Secretariat of the Generation IV International Forum (GIF), an international endeavour involving 13 countries aiming to carry out the research and development (R&D) needed to establish the feasibility and performance capabilities of the next generation of nuclear energy systems. The NEA organised the first GIF symposium in Paris, which provided an opportunity to widely communicate the achievements and goals for the six systems under consideration.

In addition to these outstanding events and initiatives prevails the core programme of work of the Agency which is reflected in this *Annual Report*. Readers will find out how the NEA continued in 2009 to provide state-of-the-art analyses and remained at the forefront on a wide range of nuclear issues, including nuclear safety and regulation, nuclear economics, nuclear law, radioactive waste management, radiological protection and nuclear science. Further, the Agency operates a unique Data Bank and manages several international joint projects.

This intense activity would not have been possible without the political support of the NEA member countries, the technical input of NEA experts and the dedication of NEA staff. I would like to reiterate my thanks to all of them, who made the NEA's achievements in 2009 a shared success.



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