
OECD/NEA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL NUCLEAR SAFETY ENHANCEMENT

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Statement by
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Thank you, Mr. Tanaka. It is a pleasure to be here this morning and to share with you the views of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and its contribution to enhancing global nuclear safety. I am also very pleased that we have been able to organise this conference in co-operation with the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), which you chair.

Why are we here today? 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of Japan joining the OECD, a very important event for both parties – the Japanese Government and the OECD. Mr. Gurría, the Secretary-General of the OECD, and Mr. Ishihara, the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan will join us later today to provide the closing remarks, underlining the importance of this event.

When Japan joined the OECD 50 years ago, the Japanese nuclear institutions – including the safety authorities, policy bodies, research institutions and scientific agencies – joined the NEA. Since then, Japanese institutions have been one of the most active parties contributing to the Agency's activities, in particular in the safety and regulatory field, aiming to enhance nuclear safety worldwide. Their contributions and support to the NEA and all its activities over the years are greatly appreciated.

This meeting comes at **a time** when all countries are taking additional measures to continue improving the high safety levels already achieved, and in **a place** which has been significantly impacted by a nuclear accident. My expectation is that the presentations by the different regulatory authorities and international organisations will show how the countries are moving forward, learning from each other and continuing to improve their regulatory practices. The NEA is closely supporting these efforts, and I remain convinced that the NEA framework is a very effective means for the international community to collectively achieve the highest levels of nuclear safety, through international collaboration and co-operation, and the sharing of lessons learnt.

We must remember that nuclear safety not only involves reaching the highest levels of safety, but also continuing to maintain and to improve as we gain new experience, and applying the knowledge to the full life cycle of the facilities, from the front end to the back end of the fuel cycle.

The speakers on the agenda of this international conference represent experienced regulatory authorities from all over the world and key officials of international organisations who will underline that nuclear safety is a global obligation, and that an essential component of that obligation is the presence of an independent and technically competent regulatory authority which has the appropriate regulatory enforcement capacity and mechanisms.

As regards the role of the NEA, the Agency supports the member countries by ensuring that its programme of work is responsive to its member countries' needs and to the reality of the nuclear safety environment today and into the future. The *NEA Strategic Plan* ensures that the programme of work addresses both ongoing nuclear safety issues associated with today's operating nuclear installations, those under construction as well as those that are being planned with future designs.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the *Strategic Plan* also provides the flexibility needed to respond in a timely manner to high-priority, emerging issues. Throughout the Plan, emphasis is placed on the need for NEA work to produce added value for its members, and to effectively leverage the work that is being done elsewhere while avoiding duplication of any ongoing efforts. The NEA is also deeply involved in activities which aim to enhance the harmonisation of regulatory approaches as these apply to the licensing of new reactor facilities, such as the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) or the Generation IV International Forum (GIF).

As you probably know, in September 2013 the NEA published the report entitled *The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident: OECD/NEA Nuclear Safety Response and Lessons Learnt*. The report is publicly available on the NEA website, and copies have been made available in the room of both the full report in English and the Executive Summary in Japanese.

The report includes a series of main conclusions and key messages which stress that there is no room for complacency in the implementation of nuclear safety practices and concepts. Since an accident can never be completely ruled out, the necessary provisions for dealing with and managing a radiological emergency situation, onsite and offsite, must be planned, tested and regularly reviewed. The report also notes that ensuring safety is a national responsibility but poses a global concern due to potentially far-reaching accident consequences. In summary, a questioning and learning attitude is essential to continue improving the high level of nuclear safety worldwide.

The messages provided and the actions undertaken to learn from the accident will go a long way to strengthening public confidence in the effective regulation of nuclear power plants worldwide. Later today, I will have the opportunity to elaborate on these messages and actions in greater detail.

A little more than three years following the accident, the NEA continues to assist the authorities of Japan in their nuclear safety and recovery efforts as well as to facilitate international co-operation on nuclear safety and radiological protection matters. It is strongly supporting the establishment of research programmes designed to improve understanding of how the accident progressed, as well as to obtain safety-related information during the decommissioning and dismantling of the damaged facilities.

The NEA has and will continue to support international nuclear safety enhancement through its standing technical committees, working groups and joint international research projects. Our aim is to identify, share and promote best practices to continue learning and to improve.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all participants a very fruitful meeting and to confirm that the NEA will continue to co-operate with its member and partner countries to achieve together commendably high levels of nuclear safety worldwide.

Thank you.